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The Intersection of Placemaking and Planning: Examining City Placemaking Programs and Efforts

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The Intersection of Placemaking and Planning: Examining City Placemaking Programs and Efforts

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Abstract

The Intersection of Placemaking and Planning: Examining City Placemaking Programs and Efforts

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Many progressive cites are currently seeking to institutionalize programs and promote policy that develops and implements placemaking and neighborhood streetscape programs; however, cities lack a clear process to follow in developing new programs with all of the foundational elements in place for successful implementation and city planning outcomes. This Professional Report actively informs current development of a "Streets as Places" program at the City of Austin; research and recommendations will be drawn from the cities of San Francisco, Minneapolis, Seattle, and Memphis, four nationally recognized cities that provide strong models for placemaking programs. This report will address the question: *What components enabled these four cities to develop successful placemaking and streetscape programs and how can the City of Austin and other cities use these models in the development of their own placemaking programs?* This report draws upon case study research, including online research, data collection via phone and email, and interviews with key staff and partner organizations in each city. This report finds that both government-initiated placemaking activities and community-led

placemaking efforts struggle with the challenges of policy gaps, creating comprehensive plans and programs that have a broad base of understanding and support, and working through regulatory barriers that exist in city government. Furthermore, all cities cited the importance of authentic community leadership and engagement for project success. To advance to the level of San Francisco, Seattle, Minneapolis, and Memphis, a Streets as Places Program at the City of Austin will need support by city official, city management, and policy and legislation that comes from the top – the City Manager and City Council – as well as community support and engagement that comes from the bottom.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Placemaking can be defined as the process of transforming "'placeless' generic or negative urban spaces into animated and distinct public places, often by examining or referring to geographic, historical, and social context" (Tekle, 2015, pp. 440). City spaces have the ability to capture and create "personal memories, cultural histories, imagination and feelings" to nurture a sense of belonging in residents (Bedoya, 2012). Public art, sidewalks, street signage, and colorful crosswalks are just some of the strategies cities have implemented in public spaces with the intention of cultivating this sense of belonging and designing urban areas to be inviting, welcoming, and people-friendly.

Although "placemaking" is a relatively new term, it is being embraced more and more in the professional planning world through a variety of terms and definitions, including creative placemaking, place attachment, and sense of place. Under the umbrella of placemaking, these varying definitions unite under a common goal – to transform the auto-dominated streetscape of today into a shared public space that instills warmth and pride in residents. By viewing the streetscape as a public space, cities tackle the question of what makes a place unique.

The City of Austin is in its beginning stages of developing a "Streets as Places" placemaking/streetscape program. Yet, planning resources do not discuss how to achieve these goals from the perspective of local government amongst bureaucratic barriers typical to local government processes. Placemaking projects often need to go through local government permitting processes that can span across many city departments, from the Public Works Department to the Traffic Engineering or Signs and Markings Divisions. This permitting and coordination process across city departments can make initiating a placemaking project intimidating and frustrating, and it may take many years

to accomplish something as simple as putting a new trash can or bench in the public right of way. Many cities are currently seeking to institutionalize programs and policies that promote, develop and implement placemaking and neighborhood streetscape programs, but they do not have a clear path forward for doing so as a result of these frustrating, confusing, and lengthy processes.

LEARNING FROM OTHER CITIES

The purpose of this study is to explore the "why, who, what, and how much" of what it takes for a city government to launch and grow a placemaking program. This paper seeks to understand exactly why it's difficult – and how advocates, the design community, and creative, motivated city staff and leaders can tackle the true challenges to make it happen. Specifically, three central research questions define the parameters of inquiry:

1. How are formal/informal city placemaking programs or efforts formed?

A. What people, organizations, city departments, etc. are instrumental to initiating placemaking projects?

B. What resources (staffing, funding, etc.) are required to implement and run a placemaking program or project?

2. Addressing both challenges and successes, what are the greatest takeaways cities experience when implementing placemaking programs or projects?

3. How do these cases inform the formation of Austin's "Streets as Places" program as well as the formation of other city placemaking efforts around the nation that are encountering similar challenges?

To fully analyze these questions, an extensive review of placemaking programs and activities across the country is needed. For this study, however, I chose to focus in on four case studies rather than a broader analysis of numerous cities. Using the case study model allowed me to examine the organization and development of specific placemaking programs and efforts in extensive detail. Focusing on specific cities also allowed me to better understand challenges facing the planning and implementation of placemaking activities in addition to major takeaways and lessons learned. Because of the variability and diversity of placemaking programs, projects, and activities, particularly the complex and confusing nature of navigating regulatory and bureaucratic processes typical to local government, such as permitting, maintenance, and design guidelines, this study was best served by using the case study model and carefully choosing four cities with both similarities and differences in the development and implementation of their respective placemaking activities.

Selection of Case Studies

All four cities – San Francisco, Minneapolis, Seattle, and Memphis – were chosen from a review of city placemaking efforts outlined in a best practice research report. This report was completed as part of my preliminary research as an intern for Austin Transportation Department's Streets as Places program. From the list of cities reviewed in the best practice report, these four cities were chosen for different reasons. San Francisco was chosen because of its impressive SF Better Streets program, a program that stood out as a result of its comprehensive, clean, and navigable website – an endeavor Austin is trying to accomplish for its Streets as Places program – and because of the plethora of placemaking programs, projects, and tools available for residents under the SF Better Streets program.

Similarly, Minneapolis' Placemaking Hub and Seattle's Public Space Management Program (PSMP) shared a goal Austin is trying to accomplish for its own program – creating a "one-stop shop" of placemaking tools available for residents to apply in their own communities with the help of a well-organized, government supported placemaking program. These three cities all have established, formal, placemaking programs and projects presented to the community on comprehensible, navigable websites that educate residents about placemaking opportunities in their communities in a clear way.

Memphis was chosen because of its more grassroots, community led approach to placemaking that differs from the formal placemaking efforts discussed above. The MEMFix model established in Memphis offers an example of volunteer and nonprofit efforts to empower residents to plan and implement "pop-up," temporary efforts to enliven and uplift different areas of the city through various placemaking activities. This example demonstrates a successful model of placemaking initiated by residents rather than local government. It shows the potential for a true government-community collaboration that empowers residents to take charge with less regulatory burden and more partnership and cooperation on both sides.

All of these case studies present valuable takeaways and lessons learned as a result of their different experiences. Their varying perspectives reveal some striking similarities and some interesting differences that will be further explored in this report.

Formal Interviews

The primary data collection method for this study was a series of semi-structured interviews, guided by a pre-established interview guide. Interviewees include city employees in San Francisco, Minneapolis, and Seattle involved in the planning and

implementation of placemaking programs and projects in their respective cities, and leaders of the MEMFix movement now working in the nonprofit sector in Memphis. I generated a list of potential inerviewees by searching for staff contact information on each city's placemaking program website or reading media articles about each city's placemaking efforts. Potential interviewees were contacted via email with a description of the report and overall purpose and asked if he/she wanted to set up an interview or if he/she had any recommendations for other possible interviewees, based on the description of the report. These recommendations helped me schedule interviews and find additional contacts who were less publically visible. Introducing myself both as a graduate student and a City of Austin employee provided important evidence of my trustworthiness as a researcher and fellow peer. Each final interviewee was selected for their expertise in the development of their city's placemaking program or efforts, their knowledge of placemaking, their experiences navigating the challenges facing the development and implementation of placemaking efforts, and their availability during the research period. Nine formal interviews were conducted in January and February 2018. One interview with a City of Austin professional was conducted in-person and the remaining nine by phone. All interview responses were recorded by hand during the interview and transcribed electronically immediately following. Table 1 lists the interviewees, the city with which they are affiliated, the department they work in, and the interviewee's role within their organization.

Name	City	Department/Division/Organization	Role
Nicole Klepadlo	Austin	Economic Development	Project Manager
Katherine Gregor	Austin	Transportation – Active Transportation & Street Design Division	Program Manager
Robin Abad Ocubillo	San Francisco	Long-Range Planning & Policy	Urban Design & Public Space
Mary Altman	Minneapolis	Long-Range Planning	Public Arts Administrator
Kathleen Mayell	Minneapolis	Public Works	Transportation Planning Manager
Brian Henry	Seattle	Transportation – Street Use Division	PSMP Development Supervisor
Susan McLaughlin	Seattle	Transportation	Urban Design Manager
Tommy Pacello	Memphis	Memphis Medical District Collaborative (MMDC)	MEMFix organizer; MMDC President
John Paul Schaffer	Memphis	BLDG Memphis	MEMFix organizer; BLDG Memphis Executive Director

Table 1: List of interviewees.

As mentioned above, the interviews were structured by a pre-established interview guide (Appendix A). Each interviewee was asked questions related to his/her own professional and personal experience. Using this guide as a starting point, I also asked individual interviewees further clarifying questions to encourage them to elaborate on their responses to particular questions. Using these types of probes and prompts

allowed me to elicit additional richness and depth from the interviewees, particularly by drawing on the interviewees particular expertise and knowledge.

Chapter 2 of this report reviews the literature surrounding placemaking and defines the terms used in discussions of placemaking, such as place, space, placelessness, sense of place, place attachment, and creative placemaking. This chapter also explores historical representations and evolutions of placemaking and the streetscape along with current policy funding and support. Chapter 3 discusses the role of planners in placemaking and reviews available resources and tools for planners who are considering planning for and implementing placemaking programs and projects in their respective cities. Chapter 4 explores common challenges and barriers to success among the cities interviewed in starting and developing placemaking programs and projects. Chapter 5 presents information about the planning and implementation of placemaking programs and projects based on case study research and interviews with city staff and community organizers from San Francisco, Minneapolis, Seattle, and Memphis. This chapter focuses on San Francisco's Pavement to Parks and SF Better Streets program, Minneapolis' Placemaking Hub, Seattle's Public Space Management Program, and the community-driven "MEMFix" model in Memphis. Finally, Chapter 6 concludes with major case study takeaways and a recommended path forward for Austin in the development of its Streets as Places program and for other cities considering developing their own placemaking programs.

Chapter 2: Defining Place and Placemaking

Places within a community that are rooted in the historical context of the area and embedded with the values of the surrounding residents are often the most loved and visited places of a community. In order for planners to garner a fuller understanding of how to cultivate meaningful places, it is necessary to understand the language used in planning literature surrounding place and placemaking, including the concepts of place, placelessness and space, sense of place and place attachment, and creative placemaking. Furthermore, understanding the historical evolution of place and placemaking enables planners to comprehend how and why places are the way they are today and how recent trends in placemaking, including greater policy and funding support, are pointing toward a hopeful future of less 'placeless' spaces and more meaningful places.

Planners face the essential task of understanding that places have meaning and identifying ways in which to preserve or enhance the meaning of a place. In Aravot's words, places "are intelligible and addressable by all human senses" (2002, p. 207). Places interact with human beings in every direction and dimension, whether physical or social. Human experience and understanding exist in correlation with physical space. The sensations with which we experience a place can influence our feelings, actions, general well-being, and our appraisal of what surrounds us (Sepe and Pitt, 2014). 'Place' can have many meanings and definitions; in the context of this report, it is best referred to as "personal, group, or cultural space that has subjective meanings and an emotional tie between humans and their location" (Jordaan, Puren, and Roos, 2008, p.96). Place is a space with a specific character that has meaning for the individual or group (Jordaan, Puren, and Roos, 2008). It is a location that draws inspiration from its relevant contexts and reflects the symbolic meanings humans associate with it (Jordaan, Puren, and Roos,

2008). The question then, as Smith puts it, is what makes a place like no other place (2000)?

PLACEMAKING

Placemaking is an approach used by community residents and professional planners that fosters features in a neighborhood or city that make a place special or unique and that cultivate a sense of authentic human attachment and belonging. Placemaking as a term in the professional planning world has different meanings and has evolved over time. For some planners and community residents, placemaking as a term has been critiqued for assuming there is no 'place' there to begin with and for implying there is no meaningful place that currently exists. In gentrifying areas, the term can also be viewed as a threat to residents trying to preserve ethnic communities and prevent their displacement. In response, "place keeping" (personal communication, February 28, 2018) or "place crafting" (personal communication, February 5, 2018) are two terms that have been suggested as an alternative to allude to the nurturing of a place that is already present.

Despite varying definitions, professional planners tend to agree that placemaking approaches exist on a spectrum, from temporary, "pop-up," or more programmatic projects to projects or activities that take a more permanent root in a place, where the placemaking activity becomes part of the memory of the community, the place, and the city itself (personal communication, February 14, 2018). For example, a "pop-up," temporary mini park or parklet converted from an on-street parking space might temporarily unite and energize a community for a day, while a community mural that was once thought to be a temporary fixture might become a permanent, distinctive part of a community that speaks to its unique history and culture and instills community pride.

Placemaking is defined by both the everyday elements that make a space a place – the sidewalks, the benches, the planters – and the more intangible, creative elements that bring out the assets of a place – the public art performance, the community theater, the street artist – that foster experience and connections among the community (personal communication, January 19, 2018). Some planning firms specialize in placemaking, such as the Project for Public Spaces (PPS), but these expert practitioners know that robust community input and direction is essential to a successful project that becomes beloved and well used. Fundamentally, placemaking is a process that builds and evolves over time, driven by and empowering residents and community members to create lovable, meaningful places.

CREATIVE PLACEMAKING

One approach to placemaking is the concept of creative placemaking, which can be described as "those cultural activities that shape the physical and social characteristics of place" (Bedoya, 2013). With creative placemaking, artists are called upon to integrate "personal memories, cultural histories, imagination and feelings" to nurture a sense of belonging in residents (Bedoya, 2013).

Creative placemaking integrates artistic and cultural events and endeavors that feel authentic to people, reflect their collective identity, and help them to understand the historic, cultural, economic, and social context of their neighborhood, developing and building sense of place in the process (Hodgson, 2015). For example, Minneapolis' Artistic Utility Box program allows local artists to turn drab traffic signal utility boxes into mini public art murals by painting the boxes with colorful, creative designs that often reflect some aspect of the surrounding community in which they are located. By encouraging artistic and cultural endeavors, creative placemaking supports awareness of

the cultural assets inherent in a community by producing mechanisms that encourage engaged communities and give rise to neighborhood cultural expression.

This approach also includes community-driven public art, such as murals, sculptures, monuments, memorials, and mosaics. As Hodgson (2015) points out in an APA article on community character, public art can be a catalyst for the revitalization of civic infrastructure, contributes to the enhancement and personalization of public space, functions as a piece of commentary on environment and social conditions, and in many cases, activates civic dialogue.

For example, the Office of Economic and Workforce Development in Durham, North Carolina developed the Plan for Public Art on Parrish Street in 2008 (Hodgson, 2015). Durham's Parrish Street was known locally as "Black Wall Street" in the early 20th century (Hodgson, 2015). To celebrate the street's history as a prospering epicenter of black middle-class professionals and business people, the city commemorates black people and businesses through the establishment of a "museum without walls" on Parrish Street (Pfeiffenberger, 2007). Art and commemorative statues are used to invite visitors to learn about the history of the area. Through public art and other elements, the plan for Parrish Street addresses the need to catalyze economic development activity while celebrating the story of African American entrepreneurship, empowerment, and economic innovation (Hodgson, 2015).

While murals and sculptures function as a more traditional form of public art, functional streetscape elements present another public art opportunity. Through creative developments in infrastructure such as streetscape design, transit facilities, and street signage, "artists can inform, educate, and comment on local conditions" (Hodgson, 2015). For example, cities like Austin, as seen in Illustration 1, and Portland allow local artists to design and sculpt creative bicycle racks that provide bicycle parking while also

drawing attention to street furniture and the importance of bicycle racks (Hodgson, 2015). Street furniture like this is both functional and attractive, contributing to a neighborhood's sense of place.

Illustration 1: Creative bike racks in Austin, Texas (LeBlanc, 2017).

SENSE OF PLACE

As Sepe and Pitt note, places "assume a specific meaning in the moment in which we infuse them with a value" (2014, p.216). Attention to place is an acknowledgment that physical and spatial contexts are more than backgrounds to complex social and psychological processes (Thomas, Pate, and Ranson, 2014). Placemaking, then, can be defined as the process of creating places through actively weaving contextual meaning, symbolic or otherwise, into the structure of a place (Jordaan, Puren, and Roos, 2008). For example, artwork and materials and building forms may have traditional roots in the ethnicities of neighborhoods, such as the adobe structures found in New Mexico. Placemaking aims to transform "placeless" generic or negative urban spaces into

animated and distinct public places (Tekle, 2015). It is a holistic approach which seeks to give equal recognition to economic, environmental, and social characteristics in the planning and development of places (Heller and Adams, 2009).

Through placemaking, a site's unique attributes are pulled out of the weeds of standardization and enriched. This process involves contextual planning and place-based design that utilizes local knowledge to form an understanding of the history of the place in order to portray its uniqueness and preserve its history for current and future users (Jordaan, Puren, and Roos, 2008). The functional and symbolic interpretations of the elements of a place are highlighted as essential factors for understanding its meaning (Sepe and Pitt, 2014).

The goal of placemaking, in turn, is to produce sense of place, or what Aravot describes as the essential sense or feeling of well-being and safety, security and orientation, and a "remedy against feelings of alienation and estrangement" (2002, p. 202). Sense of place is experienced by all who move around in a place. For example, Jane Jacobs is famous for praising the sense of place created by Greenwich Village's lively streets. She admired her neighborhood's safe and balanced urban surroundings, which cultivated a community sense of place (Jacobs, 1961). Sense of place can be described as a place's "fingerprint" (Loukaki, 1997; Rapoport, 1977). Healey describes sense of place as the fusion of physical experiences – bumping into, looking at, hearing – with "imaginative constructions" – giving meanings and values produced through individual activity and socially formed appreciations (2010, p.34).

People crave a sense of place, as it forms part of an individual's identity and contributes to neighborhood, or cultural identity, which aids in the development of place attachment (Heller and Adams, 2009). Place attachment can be defined as "an affective bond between people and places" (Altman & Low, 1992). These bonds manifest

themselves in both physical and social settings that contribute to one's identity (Brown, Perkins, & Brown, 2002) as individuals construct their sense of place by moving through their neighborhoods and defining their own activity space within the community (Coulton, Chan, & Mikelbank, 2010).

SPACE VERSUS PLACE

The placemaking literature draws an important distinction between "place" and "space." Places, on the one hand, are termed places rather than spaces because they are "endowed with identity" (Sepe and Pitt, 2014, p.221). A community's sense of place develops and evolves over time, reflecting the values and beliefs of a community (Hodgson, 2015). Daily encounters in and around a neighborhood featuring neighbors, community events, and the physical environment foster emotional bonds between people and their homes or neighborhoods, a process that cultivates place attachment (Brown, Perkins, & Brown, 2002). The way we design our streets and buildings, and the way we outfit the streetscape can contribute to the creation of sense of place and place attachment, or to its opposing form – placelessness. When a neighborhood has a weak sense of place, it exudes an inauthentic feeling of placelessness where the features of the neighborhood don't reflect the history of the people who live there. This has particularly become a problem since World War II, as strip malls, chain outlets, and interchangeable suburbs have proliferated. Consequently, much of the United States looks like "Anywhere U.S.A." As Gertrude Stein once wrote of Oakland, "there is no there there" (Werner, 2012).

Space which cannot be defined as relational, historical, and concerned with identity is a 'nonplace' (Augé, 1995). Imagine the clichéd picture of a master planned subdivision with manicured lawns, grass cut to a certain height, and cookie-cutter houses

painted the same color and built with identical floor plans. Here, sense of place is not evident in the physical design of the community because there is nothing unique or distinctive that separates this subdivision from other subdivisions designed exactly the same, as shown in Illustration 2. It could be easily picked up and replaced with another cookie-cutter suburb with nothing perceived to have gone amiss. While emotional bonds in these kinds of neighborhoods may be cultivated amongst neighbors, emotional bonds between residents and the physical place itself may be more difficult to foster, as the resident's unique attributes are hidden by the physically generic nature of the place. Sense of place in these neighborhoods can be enhanced by hosting community events like neighborhood block parties, yard sales, or annual community events that foster sense of place by uniting the community and establishing community traditions.

Illustration 2: The master planned subdivision.

THE EVOLUTION OF PLACEMAKING

Places and the concept of placemaking have continually evolved over time. The American urban streetscape, once seen as a shared public space, has shifted toward a more placeless space, disassociated with its context and devoid of symbolical meaning. However, recent trends in both urban design and planning have shifted back toward the creation of unique, context-sensitive places and streetscapes, arguing for the creation of authentic places with a sense of place. This is further demonstrated by policy support and funding for placemaking activities from cross-sectoral partnerships and groups across the nation. From pre-1920s to post World War I and today, this chapter outlines the evolution of place, placemaking, and the urban streetscape and how recent policy and funding initiatives have given placemaking legislative and financial support.

Before the 1920s, the urban American street was a shared, public space that played many roles (Tekle, 2015). Anyone and everyone could use the street – as a playground, a marketplace, a park, and a thoroughfare (Tekle, 2015). In the years following World War I however, the modernistic era brought about a shift away from the creation of 'place' toward 'space' – standardized and sterilized locations developed with context-insensitive designs that could be duplicated anywhere (Jordaan, Puren, and Roos, 2008). Increased privatization of the urban environment and modern architectural designs led to a loss of vibrancy in public spaces and increased spatial fragmentation between different social groups (Jordaan, Puren, and Roos, 2008). As design professions increasingly designed for people and locations from a universal viewpoint, without considering the contexts involved, increased placelessness perpetuated community alienation from the urban environment and increased inequality between the rich and the poor (Jordaan, Puren, and Roos, 2008). Concepts like place, sense of place, and placemaking have received increasing attention in both spatial research and practice since

the 1970s as a response to the destruction of unique local identities due to the standardization of environments, the expansion of cities, and the effects of sprawl (Jordaan, Puren, and Roos, 2008).

The replacement of place by space resulted in developments that stood unrelated to their relevant contexts and the symbolical meaning associated with their locations (Jordaan, Puren, and Roos, 2008). As Tekle describes, many an American urban streetscape (the sidewalk, the street, and the buildings and furniture placed along them) can be characterized as "soul-crushing and distressed – scarred by grey, lifeless steel street lights, beat-up, pock-marked wooden utility poles, and traffic signals hanging from wires strung out like last year's Christmas lights" (2015, p.409). To accommodate the demands of the motor age, cities placed huge billboards along major roads, wrapped commercial signs in bright, flashing lights, and placed parking meters along the street. Concrete sidewalks, asphalt roads, and asphalt parking lots became a primary aspect of urban streetscapes across America (Tekle, 2015). As cities prioritized automobiles over people and personal retreat over community, the streetscape began to breed social isolation and alienation while subtly communicating its seeming lack of value and worth (Tekle, 2015). Consequently, the streetscape came to be ignored, giving rise to blank walls, empty lots, industrial highway overpasses, and uninviting street furniture (Tekle, 2015).

The increased privatization of public spaces and the increased prevalence of modern design led to a loss of vibrant public places and increased spatial fragmentation between communities. Influenced by consumerism, design and planning professions increasingly designed for and planned for people and locations from what Jordaan, Puren, and Roos call "a universal standpoint," disregarding local context for instant solutions (2008, p.95).

In the late 20th century, landscape architect Ian McHarg (1992) was a leader in calling for a reversal of this trend. He called for regional planning that respected the natural features of the environment in his seminal book, *Design with Nature* (1969). Along with planners and urban designers Kevin Lynch and Gary Hack (1984), he proposed contextual planning in relation to the historical, physical, and environmental characteristics of a site (Jordaan, Puren, and Roos, 2008). Unlike 'space', *place* involves specific cultural, historical, or socially meaningful values (Sepe and Pitt, 2014). Demonstrating the importance of sense of place, Lynch and Hack refer to the skilled site planner as one that "suffers a constant anxiety about the 'spirit of place'" (1984, p.5). Geographer Edward Relph (1976) and architect Christian Norberg-Shulz (1980) further espoused the creation of unique, context-sensitive places, arguing for the creation of authentic places with a sense of place to replace the meaningless, standardized, "consumeristic rootless development" that had become the new norm for planners and designers (Jordaan, Puren, and Roos, 2008).

In a 1989 review of urban design plans in the United States, Michael Southworth concluded that: "Over three-quarters of the cities analyzed were concerned with creating or maintaining identity and a sense of place. This is obviously a widely shared concern… it is most needed in the fast growing, automobile-dominated urban fringe or newer cities" (Southworth, 1990, p.401). In a hopeful turn of focus, the street is resurging as a meeting place and "public living room", as a space willing to be shared by both vehicles and pedestrians (Tekle, 2015, p.421). For example, streets in New York City's Times Square were transformed into pedestrian plazas and closed to traffic in 2009 as a temporary trial to ease traffic congestion, reduce pollution, and decrease pedestrian-vehicle injuries and fatalities (Tekle, 2015). In 2010, the pedestrian plazas were made permanent in a decision by local government (Tekle, 2015). In 2005, similar moves to take back the street were

made in San Francisco, where creative residents transformed an on-street parking space into a mini park, planting the seed for the global parklet movement (Tekle, 2015).

This renewed focus on placemaking and the streetscape came with renewed attention to small details like street furnishings, the "often overlooked utilitarian elements of the modern American street," responsible for collecting trash and recyclables through trash receptacles, lighting the way with street and pedestrian lights, protecting us from rain and sunshine through bus and transit shelters, and offering us a rest through benches and seating (Tekle, 2015). By the 1990s, street furniture came to be seen as a medium for public art; the placemaking possibilities of street furnishings began to be recognized (Tekle, 2015). Consequently, these "accessories" of the urban streetscape – the traffic signal boxes, street lights, sidewalks and pavements, benches, bus shelters, and bike racks – represent placemaking opportunities (Tekle, 2015, p.435). Street furnishings, as they currently exist in the places we walk and bike, are therefore ideal targets for "injecting warmth, humanity, whimsy, and play into the street" and balancing its "all too often cold, hard auto-centric utility" (Tekle, 2015, p.435).

As Tekle, asserts, "Streets have the capacity to be, and indeed once were, urban public space as much as public parks" (2015, p.420). The streetscape is a living, breathing physical space that functions as an important gathering place for its citizens. In adding humanity to the street through placemaking, one might also add more humans, resulting in more inviting, livable, attractive, and safe streets.

PLACEMAKING POLICY INITIATIVES AND FUNDING

As planners and urban designers have begun to re-humanize the urban streetscape, placemaking has garnered greater policy and financial support from public, private, and nonprofit sectors working together to demonstrate the benefit of and need for

placemaking activities. By framing placemaking as a necessary cultural and economic policy tool, leading placemaking supporters like the National Endowment for the Arts have established legislative and financial backing from a diverse array of stakeholders, which has led to the implementation of hundreds of placemaking projects across the nation.

Placemaking in the form of creative placemaking, in particular, has expanded the conceptual frame of what is meant by cultural policy and attracted a broader array of stakeholders in the process (Nicodemus, 2013). The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) achieved what Anne Gadwa Nicodemus calls unprecedented coordination around policy adoption, bringing widespread attention and legitimacy to the concept of placemaking and creative placemaking in record time (2013). Facing a limited budget, the NEA met with the heads of better-funded federal agencies to bolster the creative placemaking platform with the argument that the arts are uniquely positioned to catalyze successful cross-sector partnerships and support goals in education, health and human services, housing, rural development, and transportation (Nicodemus, 2013).

This conversation laid the foundation for interest and investment in creative placemaking. Success for policy-makers in the creative placemaking realm arose by directly approaching non-arts stakeholders and elevating the discussion of the role of art to discussions around community revitalization (Nicodemus, 2013). Starting in the 1990s, city officials and state legislators framed cultural production as a high-growth industry (Nicodemus, 2013). Policy-makers attempted to recruit artists and art enterprises to "harness creativity, spur innovative behavior, and support new agglomerations of creative workers and firms" (Nicodemus, 2013, p.216). With the backing of Richard Florida's *Rise of the creative class* (2002), political leaders looked to artists and arts industries as a way to attract highly educated workers.

In recent years, the public sector, along with foundation leaders, have increased support for efforts to utilize grassroots arts-based community building with economic development strategies (Nicodemus, 2013). In 2012, arts and cultural production contributed over $698 billion to the U.S. economy, or 4.32 percent of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product (Schupbach, 2015). This is more than construction ($586.7 billion) or transportation and warehousing ($464.1 billion) (Schupbach, 2015). In the same year, 4.7 billion workers were employed in the production of arts and cultural goods, receiving $334.9 billion in compensation (Schupbach, 2015).

For example, Austin, Texas highlights the benefits to the tourism industry in its Cultural Tourism Plan. The Plan states that the creative industries generate $4.35 billion annually in economic activity, and the tourism industry generates $6.3 billion in visitor spending alone (City of Austin). Cultural tourism refers to "travel directed toward experiencing the arts, heritage and special character of a place" (City of Austin, p. 7). The plan lays out the economic value of cultural tourism and efforts, what it means and how it impacts the city through a place-based planning approach (City of Austin). As stated in the document, the plan's purpose revolves around "continuing to build, invest, and provide the conditions that further Austin's capacity to create and share the stories of the people and cultures that define the Austin experience" (City of Austin, p. 5).

These economic development strategies include neighborhood art centers that provide opportunities for arts participation, mural programs that encourage community participation and neighborhood beautification, and creative, grassroots arts space strategies that encourage neighborhood revitalization (Nicodemus, 2013). Framing placemaking along these economic development lines elevates the value of arts organizations and projects in dollars and sense terms. It helps makes the business case for

the arts, when they can generate foot traffic for storefront local businesses and help make downtowns more attractive, exciting, and safe (Schupbach, 2015).

These strategies can be very convincing arguments for bringing placemaking projects and programs to a city. Efforts often initiate with tactical urbanism projects, temporary public art, parklets, and other streetscape improvements (Schupbach, 2015). Furthermore, placemaking is a policy and practice that contributes to the distinctiveness and authenticity of a city – key competitive advantages in an increasingly global and urbanized world (City of Austin). Attracting cultural tourism requires the ability to offer "best-in-class and diverse cultural offerings and products," which must be supported through investment in local artists and the creative economy (City of Austin, p. 7).

Funding support for placemaking and creative placemaking efforts for local government, non-profits, and private sector groups has come from a diverse group of agencies, foundations, and the private sector. Falling under the umbrella of arts funding, funding from creative placemaking includes direct public funding (state, regional, and local arts agencies), other direct and indirect public funding (various federal departments and agencies, and tax incentives), and private sector contributions (individuals, foundations, and corporations) (Nicodemus, 2013). Top funders include the National Endowment for the Arts, ArtPlace America, and private foundations like the Kresge Foundation, the Knight Foundation, the Robert Woods Johnson Foundation, and the William Penn Foundation (Nicodemus, 2013).

The Our Town Grant Program, the NEA's primary creative placemaking grants program, supports creative placemaking projects that "help to transform communities into lively, beautiful, and resilient places with the arts at their core" (Schupbach, 2015, p.29). As the program outlines, Our Town funding supports local efforts to "enhance quality of life and opportunity for existing residents, increase creative activity, and create

a distinct sense of place" (Schupbach, 2015, p.29). As of 2015, the program had invested $21 million in communities in all 50 states and Puerto Rico (Schupbach, 2015). The Our Town Grant Program provides grant opportunities across public, private, and nonprofit sectors. In Baltimore, MD, a coalition of four local nonprofit arts organizations joined together to apply an Our Town grant to bolster indoor and outdoor artistic programming in an area of the city long considered blighted (National Endowment for the Arts, "Exploring"). Another Our Town grant helped fund efforts by the City of Berea, Kentucky to create a wayfinding system that would guide visitors to important cultural sites in the city (National Endowment for the Arts, "Exploring"). Our Town grants often involve cross-sector collaboration, as in the case of the Greensboro, NC "Over.Under.Pass" project. Working off of a city plan for a four-mile, multi-use greenway that would encircle and define its downtown, a local nonprofit used this plan as an opportunity to feature public art along the pedestrian route as a way to transform its urban landscape and re-establish connections within the community (National Endowment for the Arts, "Exploring").

As these examples demonstrate, funding support for creative placemaking projects is extremely collaborative amongst different sectors and takes shape through cross-sector partnerships. Federal agencies including Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Transportation, Agriculture, and Health and Human Services serve as advisors to organizations like ArtPlace America (Nicodemus, 2013). ArtPlace is a ten-year collaboration among various foundations, federal agencies, and financial institutions with a shared goal to organize arts and culture as a primary facet of comprehensive community planning and development "in order to strengthen the fabric of communities" (Schupbach, 2015, p.29).

The end result of placemaking in its many forms results in contextually specific places with distinct and unique identities resulting from the total involvement of a unique group of placemakers (Relph, 1976). From the evolution of 'place' to 'space' to the growth of funding support for placemaking and creative placemaking efforts from a broad array of stakeholders, the concept of placemaking is beginning to take hold in cities across the nation, calling on planners to take notice.

Chapter 3: The Role of Planners in Placemaking

Planning is fundamentally about placemaking – shaping the identities of places through manipulations of the activities, feelings, meanings, and fabric that take the shape of place identity (Hague and Jenkins, 2005). Through a planner's perspective, the city can be seen as a "vessel that can be managed or manipulated to create certain human experiences or enable these experiences based on the needs of the city's inhabitants" (Jordaan, Puren, and Roos, 2008, p. 100). Placemaking stems from an awareness of the physical structures and social relations of public space not as standardized and static but as "dynamic, unfinished, and transformable," creating space for imagining, planning, and implementing alternative possibilities (Toolis, 2017, p.189). Planners can use placemaking to shape places of meaning and value. Available placemaking resources and guidebooks for planners are a good start for understanding the importance and benefits of placemaking; however, a gap in resources geared toward implementation of placemaking projects and navigation of bureaucratic processes when planning placemaking programs in local government remains a missing piece of valuable information.

An essential role of planners in countering placelessness and creating sense of place through placemaking is to more fully embrace a model that recaptures place and the streetscape as cross-cultural, locally diverse, unique space rather than fragmented, auto-dependent design (Ellis, 2005). This placemaking model refocuses on the small spaces of the city and shifts away from the "mega", profit-minded trend to create placeless, big-box, generic places that "lack soul" (Friedmann, 2010, p. 162). It pays attention to the meanings assigned to places by their users, enabling planners to manage or create places that are embedded in their context rather than standardized in their design (Jordaan, Puren, and Roos, 2008).

Consequently, placemaking requires planners to understand a place and the history embedded in it. The meanings given to a place are directly associated with its history; understanding this reveals how users perceive a place, which influences how users experience and use that place (Jordaan, Puren, and Roos, 2008). Acknowledging and understanding the human meanings attached to a physical location offers an idea of how the place might or ought to be used in the future (Jordaan, Puren, and Roos, 2008). As Sepe and Pitt point out, placemaking efforts need sensitivity towards "who lives where, what they do, what they know, how they get on, how they relate to each other, what they care about and feel that they need" (2014, p.225).

These values should be applied to even the smallest of placemaking projects, such as a bench or a bike rack in the public realm. Street furniture designed with the values of placemaking in mind will in turn be intentional, creative, and related to local context. Planners and urban designers will need input from the local community in which the street furniture might be sited, perhaps via members of a business improvement district, neighborhood association, or neighborhood storytellers or historians who might add detail and insight into the art going into the community (Tekle, 2015). As Tekle points out, this community dialogue is important given that the public is an "involuntary audience" of public art in the streetscape (2015, p.441).

Whether working as a planner in Public Works or Watershed Protection, attention to detail is an important aspect of placemaking that planners can be attentive to across departments. For example, street furnishings should be durable, resistant to graffiti or vandalism, and if possible, made of sustainable materials, as they are likely to be used again and again (Tekle, 2015). Furthermore, planners should consider giving preference for local and regional artists who can relate to the local context and consider locating street furniture in all areas of the city, not just downtown (Tekle, 2015). Giving attention

to the "accessories" and details of the streetscape through placemaking efforts like this signifies an investment in the environment that provides equal respect to the pedestrian, transit rider, cyclist, and automobile driver.

RESOURCES FOR PLANNERS AND THE MISSING PIECE

The planning literature, featured in architecture, urban design, and planning journals, emphasizes the importance of placemaking in creating inviting, welcoming spaces for people and the role planners play in creating these spaces by being well-versed in the principles for making better places (Ellis, 2005). In addition, placemaking guidebooks from the Land Policy Institute, Project for Public Spaces, the National Endowment for the Arts, and other organizations and entities provide resources for planners, neighborhoods, and communities on how placemaking can enhance community and economic development and transform public spaces.

These guides vary in the tools they provide, from recommendations and strategies for organizing community support around placemaking activities to outlining characteristics of a great place. Most resources offer a detailed outline of the importance of placemaking and focus on answering the question, *what is placemaking*? Despite providing a great overview of the concept of placemaking however, the majority of guidebooks and resources for planners do not focus on the *how* of placemaking – how do planners plan for and implement placemaking projects and programs? Specifically, how do planners working in local government plan and implement placemaking activities?

For example, Grabow's "Professional Guide" to placemaking provides guidance on effective and functional physical configuration of spaces, the value of preserving cultural resources in communities, and the importance of local character, community identity and sense of place (2013). This report provides specific examples of the

principles that make up different "functional areas" of a place (Grabow, 2013). For example, Grabow points out that strong local character, community identity and a sense of place are increased if public and private spaces are well designed and reflect the character and needs of the communities in which they occur (2013). These principles play a fundamental role in stimulating the spaces we inhabit and creating "people places" (Grabow, 2013).

The National Endowment for the Arts' Creative Placemaking guidebook, intended for planners, residents, and community development organizations, uses case studies across the nation to outline the tools available for arts-based community development and methods for collaborating with and engaging a community in placemaking efforts; it is meant as a resource guide for how to get started with creative placemaking in a community (2017). Each section of the guidebook has a series of essays from "some of the best minds in the field," and highlights case studies of projects funded through the NEA's signature arts and community development program – Our Town (2017).

For example, Chapter 4 of the guidebook focuses on best practices and ways to partner with local government on creative placemaking projects. One case study, written by the mayor of New Orleans, discusses the benefits of the creation of a Cultural Economy Office in the City of New Orleans that supports and nurtures cultural activity and industry in the city through policy and outreach (2017). This case study highlights the necessity for the government to work with communities in order to enable them to have the cultural events that create meaning and unity for their residents (2017). Another case study focuses on ways to leverage federal government resources to build local capacity and support locally for arts interventions, citing the government's ability to provide technical assistance and information on background research, to connect community members with local leaders, and to amplify the work of a community to a

national audience as some suggestions for ways that local project leaders can engage their government (2017).

Other guides, such as Project for Public Spaces' "Placemaking Booklet", outline the attributes of a "great place" and the key principles for transforming public spaces into vibrant community places (2016). This booklet discusses the "Power of 10+" concept – the idea that cities of all sizes should have at least 10 destinations where people want to be, whether that be something like a café, a place to read, a place to sit, or a place to meet (PPS, 2016). To achieve this, the booklet outlines the characteristics of a great place, which includes things like: access and linkages, comfort and image, uses and activities, and sociability (2016). Additionally, the booklet provides "11 principles for creating great community places," touching on the underlying ideas, planning and outreach techniques, action steps, and implementation to make it happen (2016).

Despite the plethora of information available in recent years about placemaking, current literature and guidebooks do not discuss how to achieve these goals from the perspective of local government amongst bureaucratic barriers typical to local government processes. As Cliff Ellis writes, "planners will be better planners if they are competent at city design and well-versed in the principles of making better places" (2005). Placemaking projects all need to go through local government permitting, review, and approval processes – and comply with City regulations – that can span across many city departments. This permitting and coordination process across city departments can make initiating a placemaking project intimidating and frustrating, and it may take many years to accomplish something as simple as putting a new trash receptacle or bench in the public right of way. Consequently, many progressive cites are currently seeking to institutionalize programs and promote policy that develops and implements placemaking and neighborhood streetscape programs but do not have a clear path forward for doing so.

Luckily, understanding how to navigate these issues is within reach. We can learn from past and present examples of cities that have successfully created programs and implemented projects that have resulted in unique and wonderful spaces and places. The next chapters delve deeper into the challenges Austin, San Francisco, Minneapolis, Seattle, and Memphis face in the placemaking process and take a closer look into the planning and implementation process of placemaking programs and projects. These findings will inform key lessons learned from the creation of both formal and informal placemaking projects and programs and recommendations for a path forward for Austin and other cities interested in developing their own placemaking programs.

Chapter 4: Challenges and Barriers to Success

As the City of Austin continues to organize and garner support for its own placemaking and streetscape program, "Streets as Places," it encounters challenges and barriers to success similar to those that its peer cities have also faced in starting their own placemaking programs. All of the cities interviewed expressed challenges related to finding a broad base of understanding and support for placemaking projects and programs. A major challenge is working through regulatory barriers that exist in city government. Risk and liability concerns also remain a common challenge in the project approval process and pose a significant barrier to implementing creative placemaking projects. Additionally, finding ways to equitably disperse placemaking projects and funds across communities remains an important challenge to be addressed.

AUSTIN

Nicole Klepadlo, a Project Manager with the City's Economic Development Department (EDD), and Katherine Gregor, a Program Manager in the Active Transportation and Street Design Division of the Austin Transportation Department (ATD), both point to the need for political will, clear policy, dedicated resources, and staffing capacity as foundational issues.

One challenge the City encounters is getting multiple departments on board with placemaking and communicating its importance across departments. Nicole Klepadlo identifies placemaking education, both internally and externally, an essential element of success (personal communication, January 19, 2018). In her experience, significant time must be spent initially educating the different divisions and departments of the City of Austin about *why* benches, planters, street trees, and bike racks are important and the value of taking public realm enhancements to the next level (personal communication,

January 19, 2018). Gregor agrees, stating that placemaking is "often seen as a frill, not a necessity" (personal communication, February 1, 2018).

Klepadlo works with merchant's associations in neighborhood business districts, through the Souly Austin program. The local business owners have also required education and engagement; many quickly understand the economic value of small placemaking interventions in their districts (personal communication, January, 19, 2018). The educational component is necessary for garnering support and getting both local government and citizens on board. EDD, which also houses the Cultural Arts Division, has provided leadership in framing placemaking as a tool for creating an economically competitive city.

Currently, the Austin Transportation Department "Streets as Places" program lacks dedicated funding and staff. Typically in City government, these resources follow clear policy and direction from City Council and the Mayor. In Austin, these initiatives have been activated at the Department level; but they lack the underpinnings of policy and adopted plan, as well as line items in the Council-adopted annual budgets. There is no dedicated funding or resources for placemaking projects. Klepadlo notes that there are many good placemaking ideas out there, but asks in essence, "how do you execute them with funding and capacity issues?"

Gregor notes that both ATD and EDD have many other responsibilities that are considered higher priorities by both elected officials and city management executives (personal communication, February 1, 2018). At the time the "Streets as Places" program idea was formulating, ATD was presented with extraordinary demands. These include developing a comprehensive transportation plan for the city (the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan), the organization and implementation of the city's Vision Zero action plan and program to end traffic deaths and serious injuries, the 2016 bond election that tasked

the Active Transportation and Street Design division to deliver $20 million in bikeway bond projects, and the rewriting of the transportation and street design elements in Austin's new land development code, CodeNEXT. As a result of this intense work load and competition for limited resources, Gregor asserts that part of the challenge comes in finding the right time to get the program going (personal communication, February 1, 2018).

Klepadlo emphasizes that placemaking is intended to be creative, while government regulations tend to be rigid and to take away from this creative aspect (personal communication, January 19, 2018). How do cities balance the need for regulation with the creativity and freedom to make their places great?

To get a head start on tackling these challenges, Austin and other municipal governments typically look to "best practices" in peer cities.

SAN FRANCISCO

The City of San Francisco encounters both internal (within City departments and divisions) and external (with residents and the community) challenges in the planning and implementation of projects within the city. Internally, perceptions of risk and liability surrounding some of the placemaking projects poses a major constraint, according to Robin Abad, a San Francisco professional planner interviewed for this project. Consequently, it is sometimes difficult to get projects approved by the various departments. Externally, pushback from the community will always exist when a city proposes to change the geometry of a roadway – whether it comes from taking away a parking space to create a parklet or taking away a vehicle travel lane to install bike lanes (personal communication, February 28, 2018).

MINNEAPOLIS

Program staff in Minneapolis observed that, although the city has very active and engaged residents, the most active and engaged residents often come from and initiate projects in more well-off or affluent communities and neighborhoods because they have the resources to do so (personal communication, February 14, 2018). Consequently, placemaking can become an issue of equity when cities rely on communities to initiate and fund their own projects. For example, residential block event permit fees can reach up to $200, which may not be feasible for the most distressed neighborhoods in the city. This is one challenge that Minneapolis is trying to find solutions to overcome.

An additional challenge comes in the form of city bureaucracy and regulation. As placemaking projects function alongside and interact with other necessary city services, they must frequently navigate bureaucratic and regulatory concerns. For example, placing local art on traffic signal boxes mixes a placemaking project with an essential city service – the regulation of traffic signals. City ordinances, after all, permit what can and cannot be in the public right of way and it is difficult to change a city ordinance (personal communication, February 14, 2018).

Additionally, neighborhoods and residents can be naive about these ordinances and the liabilities and insurance associated with them. Cities are liable for the safety of their residents. Insurance and liability issues can be a major barrier to implementing a placemaking project. Cities are also subject to federal law such as the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), which is up to cities to interpret but can cause major concern and backlash if interpreted in what is perceived unsafe. For example, Minneapolis would like to implement a Creative Crosswalks program, allowing local artists to propose colorful crosswalk designs, but MUTCD regulations pointing to safety

concerns are a regulatory barrier preventing this from being achieved (personal communication, February 14, 2018).

Finally, communities and residents can be resistant to change. Events like Open Streets, where streets are closed temporarily to traffic, or programs like the Parklet program, where a parking spot is temporarily closed to vehicle use, can cause pushback (personal communication, February 23, 2018).

SEATTLE

One of the biggest challenges Seattle encounters in managing the projects under the PSMP is making sure every project aligns with safety concerns and working with the City's traffic engineers to do so, which takes a considerable amount of time and patience (personal communication, January 17, 2018). Another barrier sometimes involves negative public perception around a new project going into a community, particularly if it is perceived to impact business owners. Seattle staff members interviewed for this report note that there will always be a part of the community that will always fight against new projects and always disagree.

Furthermore, because the PSMP is managed by the Department of Transportation, SDOT staff point out that it can be challenging to make the argument that pedestrian needs are just as important as what is generally thought of as "typical" mobility needs, like streets, highways, and traveling by automobile. SDOT has faced the challenge of how to build a broad base of understanding and support – across elected officials, city staff, stakeholders, and the general public – that investments that address "human needs," such as green space and public space, are equally important as investments that address transportation needs, such as building new roads (personal communication, February 22, 2018). Their use of the names Street Use Division and Public Space Management

Program have been part of addressing this challenge, by stating these as clear scopes of work for the Transportation Department.

MEMPHIS

One of the challenges in carrying out events like MEMFix and other more grassroots projects comes in the form of regulatory barriers imposed by local government (personal communication, February 5, 2018). Despite Memphis' lean form of government, this is still a barrier that community leaders encounter. Additionally, Tommy Pacello, president of the Memphis Medical District Collaborative community development nonprofit, notes that it can be a challenge when local government tries to take control of a project because the result often feels inauthentic and bogged down by rules and regulations rather than an organic, community-lead process that happens naturally and freely (personal communication, February 5, 2018). Furthermore, when planning and implementing projects, there is always a lingering fear of failure that the project will not be successful.

As John Paul Schaffer, the Executive Director of BLDG, puts it, some of the biggest challenges come in the form of time, money and volunteers (personal communication, February 7, 2018). Finding funding is always an issue, but so is wrangling volunteers for each event (personal communication, February 7, 2018). As far as time goes, planning for an event cannot take too long because people will become disengaged from the project; however, staff also needs to allow plenty of time to move the pieces together in order to get everything done (personal communication, February 7, 2018).

Chapter 5: Implementing Placemaking Programs and Projects

More mature city placemaking initiatives in San Francisco, Minneapolis, Seattle, and Memphis offer key lessons for cities such as Austin that are just beginning to standardize their programs. This chapter presents case studies featuring these three cities and the ways they have been successful with their own placemaking programs. The City of Austin, along with other cities facing similar challenges and barriers, can learn from how these three cities have initiated, planned, and implemented their various programs and projects and how they have overcome, and are still in the process of overcoming, some of the same challenges Austin is currently facing. From case study research and interviews conducted with city officials involved with these placemaking programs and projects, this chapter describes the ins and outs of San Francisco's Pavement to Parks program and the city's SF Better Streets website, Minneapolis' "one-stop-shop" Placemaking Hub, and Seattle's Public Space Management Program.

SAN FRANCISCO

Project for Public Spaces (PPS) has recognized San Francisco as a city committed to placemaking as a strategy for creating more vibrant public life (2009). One of the most loved and celebrated placemaking projects – the parklet – was born in San Francisco, leading to the nationally celebrated and practiced Park(ing) Day - turning on-street parking spaces into mini-parks for a day. There are now over 40 parklets sprinkled across the city of San Francisco, each with a unique design (Baard). Many are sponsored by or maintained by local businesses in the surrounding area (Baard).

The Pavement to Parks program, a collaborative program between the City of San Francisco and local communities, oversees the creation of parklets and guides communities through the process with a Parklet Manual, which includes criteria for

creating a parklet, the process of applying for permits, a guide to constructing the parklet, and information on city policy surrounding parklets (City of San Francisco, 2015). The Pavement to Parks program and the city's SF Better Streets website, the broader umbrella of placemaking tools under which Pavement to Park falls, demonstrate the importance of obtaining legislative and cross-departmental support for a successful placemaking program while also revealing the necessity for a comprehensive, navigable website that both empowers residents with a toolkit of opportunities.

Pavement to Parks Unpacked

The Pavement to Parks program started in 2009 when the former commissioner of the New York City Department of Transportation, Janette Sadik-Khan, visited the then mayor of San Francisco, Gavin Newsom, to discuss New York City's pedestrian plaza experiments in Times Square (personal communication, February 28, 2018). In an effort to answer the questions - what would San Francisco's take be on New York City's efforts? What kind of similar experiments could San Francisco implement? – Mayor Newsom issued an executive directive to the Department of Public Works, the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, and the Planning Department to come up with a "temporary urbanism program" (personal communication, February 28, 2018). The concept the agencies came up with allows businesses, nonprofits and property owners to apply for permits to convert adjacent on-street parking into open spaces that are open and accessible, though also removable. Starting in 2010, a few businesses applied for the open spaces, but since there were no guidelines for parklets, it took months between rounds of applications for city planning officials to smooth out the kinks and answer lingering questions, including how the spaces should be designed (Koskey, 2013). By working out the kinks of the program, such as permitting and application

processes and parklet design guidelines, and with support from the mayor, city staff was able to codify a framework for the program in what is now the Pavement to Parks program (personal communication, February 28, 2018).

Resources, Funding, and Maintenance

In the program's beginning stages, many staff individuals dedicated time to the Pavement to Parks program; together, their work on the program is estimated to equal four full-time Planning Department staff members (personal communication, February 28, 2018). As the program has become more established, this staff time dedication to this program has shortened to the equivalent of one and a half full-time staff members (personal communication, February 28, 2018). The Planning Department works closely on this program with Public Works, which is responsible for the permitting for the program (personal communication, February 28, 2018). However, City staff noted that support for a program like Pavement to Parks is not confined to a few departments. Staffing for placemaking projects like parklets needs support from the larger "government organism" made up of multiple departments across the city (personal communication, February 28, 2018).

The parklet program is funded by partner/project sponsors (personal communication, February 28, 2018). These public-private partnerships are often formed with Merchant's Associations, for-profit businesses, and non-profit entities who raise the money needed to pay for a parklet (personal communication, February 28, 2018). These sponsors pay for the full cost of the parklet, usually $15,000 - $20,000, sometimes using resources like city grants to do so (personal communication, February 28, 2018). The community initiates the majority of parklet projects, and they do so through an application process with the city (personal communication, February 28, 2018). Daily and

capital maintenance of the parklet, which is the applicant's responsibility, is part of the permit agreement between the applicant and the city (personal communication, February 28, 2018).

SF Better Streets

The city's 'SF Better Streets' website features the information about the Pavement to Parks program along with many other placemaking programs. The website is a prime example of how cities can help residents untangle the web of city bureaucracy in order to initiate placemaking projects in their own communities. The Planning Department of San Francisco describes the website as the combination of all the city's guidelines, permit requirements, and resources for public space development onto one site, giving the user a helpful step-by-step approach toward improving the city's streets (Bialick, 2012). The website helps to spread awareness of the street improvements available to residents – such as crosswalks, bike corrals, public art, and street lighting – and guide them through the city's regulatory bureaucratic processes, such as permitting, official codes and documents, and maintenance. It was launched in 2012 as a collaboration of the Planning Department, Department of Public Works, SF Public Utilities Commission, and the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) (Bialick, 2012).

The website followed in the footsteps of the city's 2010 Better Streets Plan (BSP), which is aimed at streamlining the process for making improvements to the pedestrian environment (Bialick, 2012). A citywide policy document, the BSP provides a unified set of standards and guidelines that govern the design of all city streets, based on a balanced perspective, but emphasizing transit, cycling and walking in the design, building and

maintenance of the public right-of-way (San Francisco County Transportation Authority, 2010). From the San Francisco County Transportation Authority website:

> In addition to recognizing the increasing importance of sustainable modes of transport, the BSP reflects the understanding that public spaces are about much more than just transportation—that streets serve a multitude of social, recreational and ecological needs that must be considered when deciding on the most appropriate design. The BSP offers the City the opportunity to integrate all these considerations into a single framework (2010).

The Better Streets Plan is the essential policy foundation that allowed the development of tools to facilitate projects. These tools are what is available to the public on the SF Better Streets website. It provides the necessary tools and resources for citizens to participate in the design and creation of great public spaces.

As Joanna Linsangan, communications manager for the Planning Department, stated, "Before this website was launched, this information wasn't available. For someone to go through the process, someone would have to go and contact various departments around the city" (Bialick, 2012). The site provides a valuable service for determined citizens, advocates, and communities that have a vision for their public spaces while giving citizens a greater appreciation and understanding of what it takes to get things done in a city.

Navigating the Website: Easy and Informative

As one online newspaper put it, the SF Better Streets website is best understood as "city-supported citizen engagement" (Storm, 2012). With an emphasis on direct citizen engagement through the provision of necessary tools for engaging city government and the community, the website empowers individual citizens and associations to change their streets by including ideas for street improvements, accessible descriptions of necessary permit processes, and suggestions for building community support (Storm, 2012). On the

page for each specific street improvement is a small box titled "Agency who can help," which provides access to further information on how to request a specific street improvement (City of San Francisco, 2015).

As stated on the site, the website was created to "assist San Franciscans to make street improvements in their neighborhoods, shopping districts, and workplaces. The site provides information on street improvement project types, the City's permitting process, maintenance responsibilities, and applicable codes and guidelines" (City of San Francisco, 2015). The website provides resources for three different audiences. The first is targeted at residents to "work with [their] neighbors to make street improvements happen" (City of San Francisco, 2015). The second audience is targeted at developers and contains a page describing the requirements and resources for street improvements for new development (City of San Francisco, 2015). Finally, the website has a specific "Merchant's Corner" for business owners, where improvements like "plantings, banners, street furnishings, district signage, and public art" are highlighted as some of the improvements merchant groups may be most interested in (City of San Francisco, 2015). The website has three main tabs on the first page: "Learn the Process," "Find Project Types," and "Design Guidelines" (City of San Francisco, 2015).

The content of this website provides a good model for other cities of exactly how to help residents implement City policy intent. Without very specific guidance and pathways to approvals and project completion, the ideas in the Better Streets Plan might have remained just that – good ideas and intentions. Thus, a detailed exploration of the content of this website provides tremendous insight into exactly the steps, guidance, and processes that cities need to create to make a successful placemaking program.

"Learn the Process": Permits and Maintenance Responsibilities

Clicking on the "Learn the Process" tab leads to an overview of the process for obtaining permits for any work on streets and sidewalks (City of San Francisco, 2015). This section includes a Permit Summary table with the permit process by project type (City of San Francisco, 2015). The summary table is divided into "activating street space," which includes things like block parties and outdoor café and restaurant seating; "greening and stormwater management," which includes things like street trees and sidewalk landscaping; "pedestrian safety and traffic calming," which includes things like crosswalks and pedestrian refuge islands; "reclaiming roadway space," which includes bike corrals and parklets; and "streetscape furnishings," which can be seen in Figure 1 below (City of San Francisco, 2015).

A funding and technical resources page within this section details the cost of street improvements, which the website states, "ranges from simple interventions such as adding a street tree or landscaping to full re-designs of an entire corridor, which can cost millions of dollars per block" (City of San Francisco, 2015). This page lists potential funding sources and technical assistance available to individuals and community groups for street improvements, from small to large scale projects, along with descriptions of different grants and programs available to help fund different projects (City of San Francisco, 2015).

This section also includes a "maintenance section" – the City notes the importance of considering who is responsible for maintaining these improvements over time, stating that "Public and privately-sponsored projects must have an agreed-upon maintenance strategy to move forward with permitting and installation" (City of San

STREETSCAPE FURNISHINGS

Type of Improvement	*Responsible Agency*	*Relevant Permits & Applications*	*Public Hearing or Legislative Action*	*Maintenance Responsibilty*
PEDESTRIAN LIGHTING				
Pedestrian Lighting	DPW	Major Encroachment Permit	Board of Supervisors action	Varies: Applicant, DPW
Roadway Lighting	SFPUC	General Excavation Permit	SFPUC Commission action, if not in SFPUC inventory	If in SFPUC inventory, SFPUC will maintain. If not, applicant maintains.
Special Sidewalk Paving	DPW	Special Sidewalk Surface Permit		Applicant
SITE FURNISHINGS				
Banners	DPW	Banner Permit		
Benches & Seating	DPW	Minor Sidewalk Encroachment Permit		Applicant
Bicycle Racks [13]	SFMTA	Request through 311		SFMTA
	DPW	General Excavation Permit		
Community Kiosks [14]	DPW	Major Encroachment Permit	Board of Supervisors action	Applicant
Bollards	DPW [15]	Minor Sidewalk Encroachment Permit		Applicant
	DPW [16]	Sidewalk Pipe Barrier Permit		
Newsracks [17]	DPW	Request through 311		City Contractor
Public Art	SFAC, DPW [18]	Minor Sidewalk Encroachment Permit	Civic Design Review Committee review	SFAC (public projects); Applicant (community initiatives)
	SFAC, DPW [19]	Major Encroachment Permit	Civic Design Review Committee review; Board of Supervisors action	
Public Toilets [20]	DPW	Request through 311		City Contractor
Signage	DPW [21]	Minor Sidewalk Encroachment Permit		Applicant
	DPW [22]	Major Encroachment Permit	Board of Supervisors action	Applicant
	SFMTA [23]	Request through 311		SFMTA
	Planning [24]	Sign Permits		Applicant
Transit Shelters [25]	SFMTA	Request through 311		City Contractor
Sidewalk Trashcans [26]	DPW	Request through 311		DPW

Figure 1: Streetscape furnishings summary table (City of San Francisco, 2015).

Francisco, 2015). Permits for individual improvements such as installing sidewalk landscaping or outdoor seating can be relatively simple, only requiring an agreement between the permitee and the City to keep the improvements clean and in good repair, while other more complex projects, such as corridor-wide street improvement or street improvements associated with new development, can be more complex, requiring a meeting with Public Works early on to develop a long-term maintenance strategy for the project.

In addition, a "Building Neighborhood Support" section offers residents tips for engaging their neighbors in order to garner neighborhood support for a street improvement project. The City urges community residents to engage and inform their neighbors even for something as small as a small neighborhood planting project (City of San Francisco, 2015).

"Find Project Types": Description and Process Overview

This section outlines the description of different project types and a process overview for the following project types: "Activating Street Space," Greening and Stormwater Management," "Pedestrian Safety and Traffic Calming," "Reclaiming Roadway Space," and "Other Streetscape Elements" (City of San Francisco, 2015). Figure 2 shows the "Reclaiming Roadway Space" project types.

If a San Francisco resident clicks on "Bike Corrals" as shown in Figure 2, this leads to: a description about why bike corrals/bike parking is an important and necessary streetscape element; the "process overview," which includes links to a bike corral application and permit process description; the "official codes and documents" section, which contains a link to the Better Streets Plan (street design guidelines); the

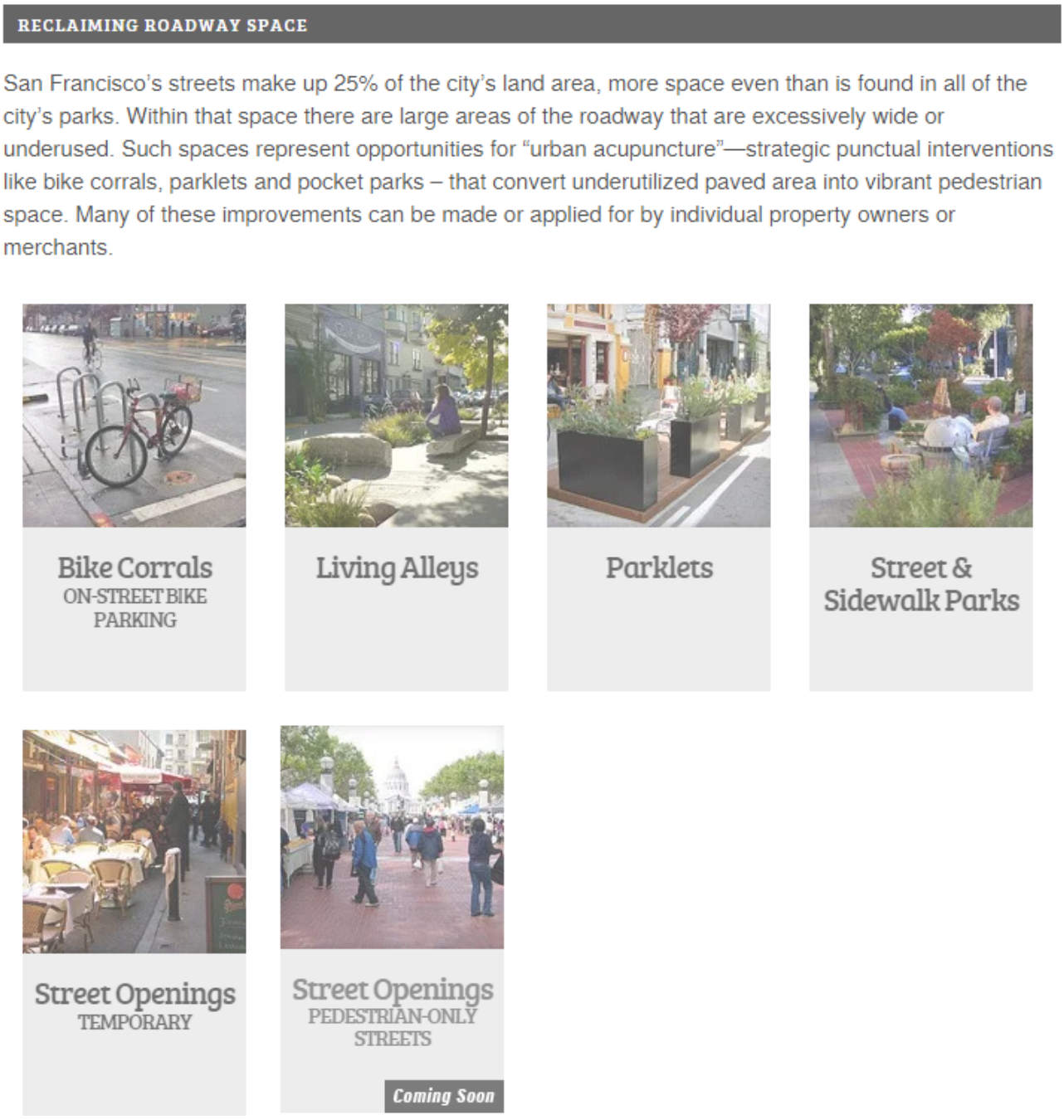

Figure 2: "Reclaiming Roadway Space" project types (City of San Francisco, 2015).

"Design Guidelines" section, which describes what kind of street types bike corrals can be placed on and what part of the sidewalk zone they are placed on (this also includes a diagram layout of an on-street bicycle parking space and where the on-street bicycle parking should be placed); and finally, the "maintenance" section, which explains that SFMTA requires bike corral project sponsors such as merchants, property owners, or neighborhood groups to agree to keep the area clean and free of debris (City of San Francisco, 2015).

"Design Guidelines"

The last major tab of the website is the "Design Guidelines A-Z" section, which allows one to search for the design guidelines for individual projects seeking to make improvements to streets, sidewalks and streetscape elements in the city (City of San Francisco, 2015). Design guidelines direct the placement, design and materials selection of streetscape features in relation to one another. As the website states, "Good street design depends on considering the relation of individual streetscape elements to the overall character of the street" (City of San Francisco, 2015). The website provides certain guidelines that may be required as part of permits, while others include advice and best practice for design of street elements (City of San Francisco, 2015).

San Francisco's robust SF Better Streets program provides a good model for other cities. The toolkit available on its website provides a peer city best practice of how cities can organize and provide to citizens placemaking tools in a way that is extremely accessible and easy to understand. SF Better Streets supports and encourages residents to get involved with placemaking by untangling the often scary and unapproachable web of City rules and regulations.

MINNEAPOLIS

The city of Minneapolis has also made placemaking a civic and programmatic priority. This complements other investments by the City that have prioritized the pedestrian and bicyclist realms. Its investments include an extensive system of bike trails that are busy year-round with both recreational riders and bike commuters (Raphael, 2009). Bike paths provide people with transportation, exercise, and a place for running into and meeting neighbors and fellow community members.

Besides an extensive bike trail network, Minneapolis has led a plethora of creative placemaking efforts across the city. In 2012, ArtPlace, a cross-sectoral creative placemaking collaboration, granted Twin Cities organizations $1.3 million to support placemaking activities (Regan, 2014). This included $250,000 towards Arts on Chicago, an initiative that provided mini-grants for creative endeavors, such as creative bike racks welded and fabricated by local artists, led by artists in neighborhoods around Minneapolis (Regan, 2014).

In addition, Intermedia Arts, a multidisciplinary, multicultural arts center based in Minnesota has actively collaborated with the City on creative placemaking projects. Intermedia Arts, as a nonprofit arts center in the city, engages artists and residents in creative community-building efforts throughout the city, with an emphasis on traditionally underrepresented communities (City of Minneapolis, 2012). The organization provides cross-sector leadership training through a Creative Community Leadership Institute and ArtsHub co-working spaces for local artists, organizations, and organizers (City of Minneapolis, 2012).

Intermedia Arts and the City of Minneapolis received $325,000 from ArtPlace for the Creative CityMaking Project, a collaboration between local artists and planners to "develop fresh and innovative approaches for addressing the long-term transportation,

land use, economic, environmental and social issues facing Minneapolis" (City of Minneapolis, 2012). In this program, four local artists work closely within the City's Planning Division, producing collaborative work, like creative asset mapping and arts-based community engagement, showcased throughout the year at citywide community events, culminating in a public exhibition and forum at Intermedia Arts (City of Minneapolis, 2012).

The City's "Plan for Arts and Culture", established by the Minneapolis Arts Commission and the Minneapolis City Council, outlines a vision for bringing together artists and arts organizations like Intermedia Arts with city departments to explore creative ideas for addressing city problems (City of Minneapolis, 2012). The Creative CityMaking program fosters this collaboration, with the goal of increasing the participation of diverse communities in determining the city's future and "developing a city that is a living work of art" (City of Minneapolis, 2012). For example, in collaboration with the city's Community Planning and Economic Development department, local artists worked with staff and consulted with Minneapolis communities for a creative asset mapping project, which identified important strengths and positive qualities in communities around the city, particularly in high poverty areas (Intermedia Arts, 2018). The Creative CityMaking program builds on work happening in cities around the globe centered on the impact of people-oriented planning and the role of the arts and the creative process on developing vibrant urban places while examining the ways in which artist/planner collaborations can contribute to placemaking, vibrancy, and community change (City of Minneapolis, 2012).

In addition to creative placemaking-supportive initiatives like this, Minneapolis' Placemaking Hub provides an accessible and clear "one-stop-shop" toolkit of

placemaking programs and projects that fosters an engaged and interested community enabled to take advantage of the tools offered.

The Placemaking Hub

In line with the goals of Creative CityMaking and placemaking across the city, Minneapolis created the Placemaking Hub, an online "one-stop-shop" for public realm enhancement tools (City of Minneapolis, 2017). Aggregating the tools available through the City's Public Art program, Public Works, and Urban Design departments, the Hub directs residents to each program or project website where specific processes, procedures and permitting necessary for communities and neighborhoods to enhance their streets and public spaces can be found (City of Minneapolis, 2017).

Possible enhancements and projects featured on the Placemaking Hub include: sidewalk cafés, bike racks, bike corrals, litter containers, ash receptacles, paint the pavement, artist designed utility boxes and other art, parklets, temporary plazas, block events, community gardens, urban farms, market gardens, trees, plantings, façade improvements and other tools to enhance a street or corridor.

Each project page provides descriptions of each project type along with: locations around the city of each project type, the link to available project manuals, application materials, additional resources, and staff contact information (City of Minneapolis, 2017). Project manuals include documents such as the City of Minneapolis Parklet Application Manual intended to guide applicants through the process and procedures for applying to install a parklet. It provides a comprehensive overview of the program, policies, procedures, criteria and guidelines for creating parklets in the city right-of-way (City of Minneapolis, 2017).

The Origins of the Placemaking Hub

The Long-Range Planning Department within the City of Minneapolis, made up of urban design and public art staff, in collaboration with the Public Works Department, originally started meeting with different divisions to talk about and share the current status of the City's existing placemaking projects (personal communication, February 14, 2018). In time, these divisions began to realize that many of the project applicants were the same residents in the city wanting to apply for multiple projects yet having to find and talk to a range of people while trying to navigate the requirements and guidelines of multiple departments (personal communication, February 14, 2018). The City realized that residents navigate similar processes when wanting to do a project in their community but that these projects have different pieces involved, including different guidelines, regulations, and forms to fill out (personal communication, February 14, 2018). City staff realized that to better serve the public, they needed to put all of this information in one place – a Placemaking Hub – on the City website. Though residents may still have to go through different departments for different projects, the Placemaking Hub puts all the information and tools in one place, doing a better job of educating the public about their availability and making the process easier and faster to navigate (personal communication, February 14, 2018).

Resources and Funding

As is typical for most cities, the funding for placemaking projects in Minneapolis is tight and the City relies on permit fees to cover the cost of most projects (personal communication, February 14, 2018). Some programs rely on other funding methods such as the Bicycle Corral Cost Share program, where the applicant and the City equally share, one half each, the bicycle corral program costs (City of Minneapolis, 2017). Some

projects, like community gardens, are funded through in-kind donations, while others, like the façade improvement and great streets programs, are funded through small grants (personal communication, February 14, 2018). The City allows residents to raise their own money to build their own parklets with permission from the City and also has four parklets on loan from the City to be used and reused by residents (personal communication, February 14, 2018). Additional funding for parklets comes from the City's annual Bicycle and Pedestrian fund, which allots $35,000 per year to the Parklet program (personal communication, February 23, 2018).

The Placemaking Hub itself does not require staffing as it is updated as needed by the individual departments or divisions running each program (personal communication, February 14, 2018). For individual programs like Parklets and Open Streets, staff time varies. For example, once a program like the Parklet program has become established, it might only take about 5% of one staff member's time (personal communication, February 23, 2018). Other programs, like Open Streets, where the City hosts eight events annually, might require 10% of one person's time but varies throughout the year, as this is an event that typically occurs in warmer seasons (personal communication, February 23, 2018).

Community Engagement and Project Maintenance

Community engagement plays a big part in Minneapolis' placemaking activities, and the City communicates, meets with, and collaborates multiple times a month with advisory committees and neighborhood groups (personal communication, February 23, 2018). When describing ways in which the City reaches out to communities and businesses, Mary Altman, the City's Public Art Administrator, mentions the City's Special Service Districts, often referred to as Business Districts or Merchant's Associations in other cities (personal communication, February 14, 2018). In these

districts, businesses often pay higher levels of taxes to receive a higher level of city maintenance in their district in return. In Minneapolis, these districts can also choose to fund placemaking projects in their district in return (personal communication, February 14, 2018). These Special Service Districts have advisory boards with committees that decide where and which placemaking projects are applied (personal communication, February 14, 2018).

In addition to Special Service Districts, Altman describes Minneapolis as a community that is in general very dedicated to neighborhood improvement (personal communication, February 14, 2018). Citing the City's Artist Designed Utility Box program, which has resulted in 400-500 traffic signal boxes throughout the city wrapped in a vinyl art wrap or painted by local artists, Altman describes how hundreds of these boxes have been wrapped or painted with no cost to the city – purely through neighborhood fundraising (personal communication, February 14, 2018). However, with a cost of $750 per box and hundreds dispersed throughout the city, this can be extremely costly for the City to maintain; dedicated volunteer graffiti removal forces enable the city to keep maintenance costs low along with a maintenance agreement with applicants that requires them to remove the vinyl wraps and repaint the box in a color approved by Public Works at the end of their permit life (usually 2-3 years) (personal communication, February 14, 2018). Applicants are also eligible to renew the permit at the end of the permit period, when Public Works evaluates the condition of said box and decides whether or not to renew the permit (personal communication, February 14, 2018).

Other projects, like parklets, are installed and maintained by the City of Minneapolis' Transportation Maintenance and Repair division (personal communication, February 23, 2018). In this case, Public Works is in constant communication with

maintenance staff about materials needed for the parklet and ways to minimize cost (personal communication, February 23, 2018).

Some of the greatest success Minneapolis has reported as a result of the Placemaking Hub and of their placemaking efforts is simply the availability of a range of possible placemaking projects open to residents to build and enliven their neighborhoods and communities (personal communication, February 14, 2018). For example, as a result of the city's Artistic Utility Box Program, four to five hundred utility boxes around the city have been transformed from dull, grey boxes into beautiful pieces of public art. The Placemaking Hub has given the City of Minneapolis the opportunity to facilitate community creation of great places through the tools it provides, offering residents the ability to make it happen themselves (personal communication, February 14, 2018).

SEATTLE

Seattle's Public Space Management Program offers another example of a formal city placemaking program that is accessible to residents, transparent, and full of tools and resources to give communities and neighborhoods the information they need to be active in placemaking efforts. The program's public face is a very easy to navigate, clean, and information filled website. The City of Seattle's placemaking efforts particularly highlight the gains and successes that can be made with policy support and backing, along with the benefit of providing a clear and coherent description of especially confusing processes such as permitting. In addition, Seattle's Public Space Management Program goes the extra mile by providing resources like metrics for assessing the impact of placemaking projects in the city as well as handbooks and supplements for individual projects and programs.

The Public Space Management Program

The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) created the Public Space Management Program (PSMP) to provide tools for residents, organizations, and businesses to make it easier for them "to enhance their neighborhoods and strengthen their community by enlivening public spaces and promoting economic vitality" (Seattle Department of Transportation). As their website states, "Vibrant public spaces encourage social activity, help local businesses thrive, and create safer, more attractive streets" (Seattle Department of Transportation).

The Public Space Management Program offers a variety of tools, activities, and events as program and project opportunities. Some programs, like Adaptive Streets, Park(ing) Day, Parklets & Streateries, Community Activation (Play Streets, Block Parties, Farmers Markets, Festival Streets, Special Events), and Seattle People Street, are focused on creating inexpensive, temporary solutions that allow communities to test out new public space and street improvement ideas, promote alternative use of the streets, and encourage residents to use their streets creatively and actively. Programs like Planting in the ROW, Shoreline Street Ends, Sidewalk Seating, and Street Furniture and Decorations, seek to increase the vibrancy of the public right of way and beautify the streetscape. Other programs, like Awnings and Portable Signs, Street Vending, and Pole Banners, seek to support local business development and commercial district vitality. Additional programs like Fences, Walls, and Stairs, and Newsstands in the ROW seek to minimize and maintain structures in the public right of way in areas where public use is anticipated. The community-facing program is application-based, with a large portion of projects initiated by Seattle residents. To support this model, Seattle developed clear guidance documents and makes them available on a portal website – the same model as San Francisco and Minneapolis. The website offers an overview of each program, as well

as details about maintenance, permitting, application forms, and handbook/guidebook resources that are available.

Creating the PSMP

The PSMP grew from the efforts of a small group of staff in the city's Streets Division annual permit group. This small group manages long-term uses of the right-of-way, such as sidewalk cafes, and from it emerged various new ideas in the form of tactical urbanism and other shorter-term projects like parklets (personal communication, January 17, 2018). Staff also saw the need for clear policies, processes, and regulations. Over time, this was developed as the policy basis for the program. Through the creation of new policies around placemaking and the lowering of fees to facilitate and encourage more projects in the pedestrian realm, like sidewalk cafes and parklets, this Streets Division group began to formulate more concrete ideas around managing public space and creating public space (personal communication, January 17, 2018).

As more ideas began to form, the Mayor's Office directed the City of Seattle to put together a task force made up of 34 members of the community and city officials to generate more ideas for innovative projects that would bring vibrancy to the city (personal communication, January 17, 2018). New ideas included parklets and alley activation projects, for example; however, the task force realized they did not have an avenue to plan for and implement these projects (personal communication, January 17, 2018). Consequently, after six months of meetings, the task force produced an implementation strategy of goals and a vision. This plan then provided the necessary policy foundation for staff to develop a more detailed work plan, to establish, pilot, and identify code and policy changes necessary for the implementation of these project ideas (personal communication, January 17, 2018). Collaboration and vision by a motivated

team produced an action plan in 2013 that served as a framework for the Public Space Management Program going forward. Since that time, staff has advanced with budget, funding, and staff requests and obtained the resources from the City to do the necessary work (personal communication, January 17, 2018).

Resources and Funding

The Public Space Management Program is primarily funded through permit fees assessed for individual projects. As programs become more established throughout time, they usually require less dedicated staff time and resources. At the start of the PSMP in 2013, one staff person focused on legislation and policy while another developed and piloted the new program (personal communication, January 17, 2018). Working with a program that had scope but no budget, the City saved costs where possible, utilizing their interns to work on developing the program (personal communication, January 17, 2018). Today, four full-time staff members are dedicated to the management of the PSMP overall (personal communication, January 17, 2018). In addition, individual programs have their own dedicated staff. A prime example is Pavement to Parks, projects that create new public spaces by reclaiming underused street space for pedestrian-oriented uses. It requires two to three additional staff members dedicated to the management of the program and five to six staff additional staff members during the implementation phases (personal communication, February 22, 2018).

The fees collected from permitting play a large role in funding the various projects (personal communication, January 17, 2018), although some programs, like Pavement to Parks, are funded by fees assessed to private developers' use of the right-of-way (personal communication, February 22, 2018). This particular program receives

annual funding of $280,000 for four projects per year, or $70,000 per project from fees assessed to developers (personal communication, February 22, 2018).

The City considers a sort of cost-benefit analysis when deciding on the range of permit costs to assess for permitted projects. The higher the public benefit, the lower the permit fee the city assesses (personal communication, January 17, 2018). If a project only benefits a handful of people, such as establishing a commercial vehicle load zone for example, the City charges a higher fee (personal communication, January 17, 2018). Cost dispersion and project selection for the Pavement to Parks program is decided by an Urban Design team of two to three staff members (personal communication, February 22, 2018). When selecting Pavement to Parks project sites, the team relies on a GIS map to guide project prioritization. The map reflects open space needs in neighborhoods across the city, along with race and social justice factors, traffic safety and collision data, and the land use context of the surrounding area (personal communication, February 22, 2018). Additionally, the Pavement to Parks program holds an internal call for project sites at the beginning of each year, which allows different City departments and divisions to submit applications on a community or neighborhood's behalf (personal communication, February 22, 2018). An internal decision-making process speeds up the overall process and eliminates what would normally be a long and drawn out permitting and application process. However, this means that communities are not as involved in the selection process, even though city staff can submit applications on behalf of them.

Maintenance and Permitting

Some of the placemaking projects under the PSMP require a maintenance agreement between the City and the applicant or community host/sponsor. Community hosts partner with the City on a maintenance agreement that is customized to each site

(Seattle Department of Transportation). For example, the Parklet program requires the applicant to submit a maintenance agreement as part of the application process in order to ensure that the parklets remain clean, safe, and in a good state of repair for all members of the public to enjoy. These agreements address things such as cleanliness, vegetation, amenities, and activation at each of the project sites (Seattle Department of Transportation). Appendix B provides an example of a maintenance agreement between SDOT and a business applying for a Parklet. In addition to maintenance information, each project type webpage includes information about which type of permit is needed for each project. For example, play streets, block parties, special activities, and festival streets are all permitted by SDOT Street Use, while special activities like farmers markets require a public space permit (Seattle Department of Transportation). Figure 3 shows the permit chart included on the PSMP website that summarizes the purpose, size, timing, and permit requirements for the different types of street closures (Seattle Department of Transportation).

On the other hand, simple projects, such as small-scale planting in the planting strip or other right-of-way areas, may be completed with a free beautification permit issued by the Street Use Permit Services (Seattle Department of Transportation). One of

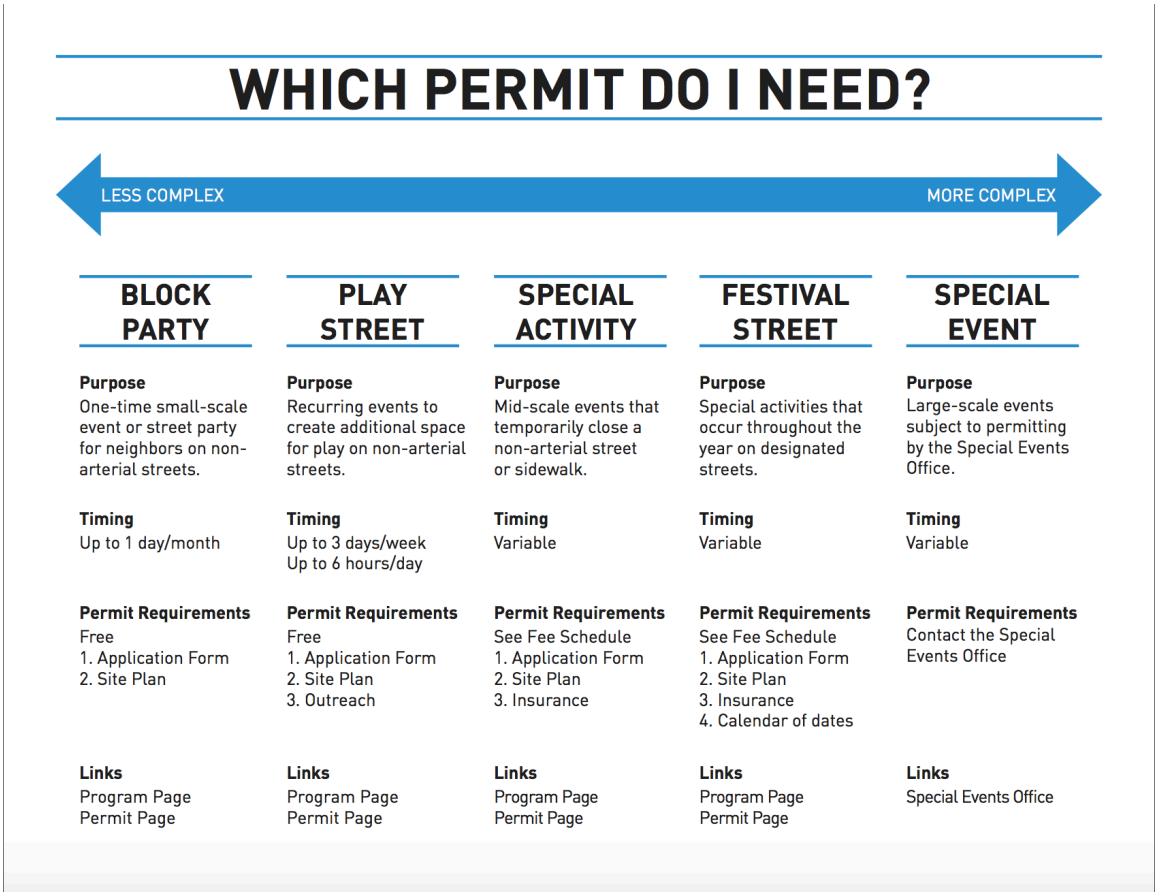

Figure 3: PSMP permit chart (Seattle Department of Transportation).

the most impressive aspects of the PSMP website is the accessibility of an informative and easy to navigate permitting page, which describes the types of permits needed for various projects and permitting tools to assist residents through the permitting process. Figure 4 shows a screenshot of what this page looks like (Seattle Department of Transportation). Each permit type page contains permit issuance fee information, workshop dates and times for further guidance and process information, and a list of project types that fall under each permit category (Seattle Department of Transportation, "Public Space Permits").

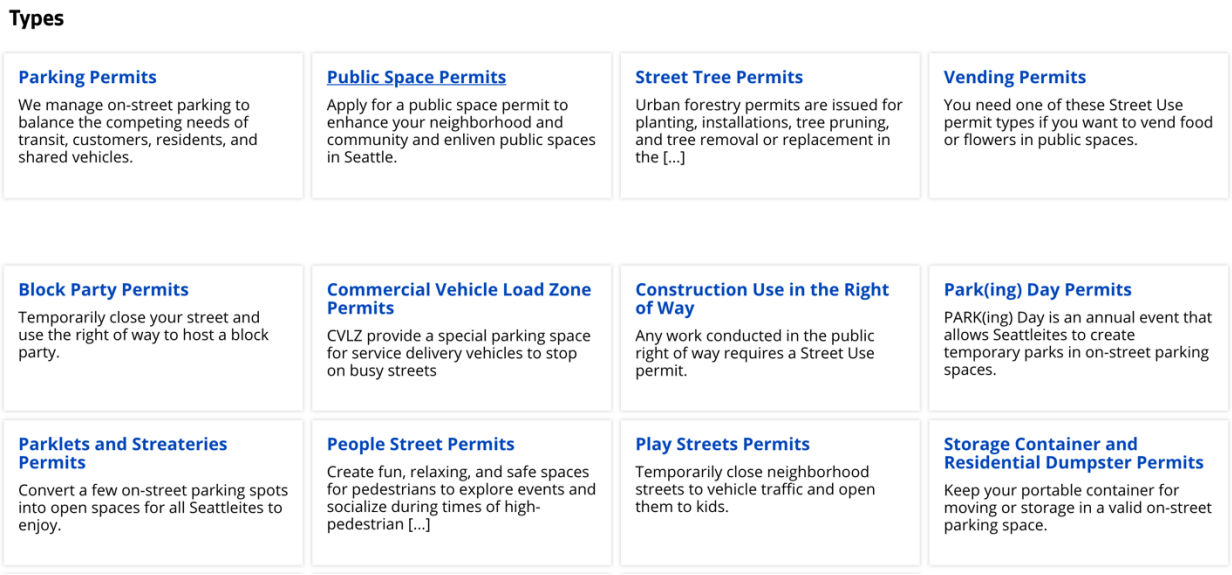

Figure 4: PSMP permit types (Seattle Department of Transportation).

While some programs, such as the Parklet program, require an application submission for new project ideas, other programs, like Pavement to Parks, are handled internally by city staff (personal communication, February 22, 2018). For this program, city staff chooses the Pavement to Park project sites rather than allowing a resident to submit an application for one. SDOT is responsible for the capital delivery of each project, eliminating much of the risk and liability concerns, avoiding the often long permitting and review process, and making the overall process much more streamlined (personal communication, February 22, 2018).

Handbooks and Additional Resources

The PSMP website also includes useful resources like metrics for assessing the impact of placemaking projects in the city as well as handbooks and supplements for individual projects and programs. For example, the Parklet and Streatery Program Goals

and Success report looks at metrics such as how often parklets are used, community perception of the spaces, their economic impact, and how transportation habits change after parklets or streateries are installed (SDOT, 'Parklet and Streatery Program'). Additionally, the website offers the Parklet Handbook, which details the application process, and all requirements for designing, permitting, building, and maintaining a parklet or streatery (SDOT, 2017). It also includes expected timelines for each phase of the project, estimated costs, and tips for assembling a project team and funding a parklet or streatery (SDOT, 2017). Streateries have a separate supplement attached, which acts as a companion to the Parklet Handbook and offers different and additional requirements needed for streateries (SDOT, 2017, 'Streatery Supplement'). Finally, a Forms and Examples Supplement to the Parklet Handbook contains all the forms residents need to complete the parklet and streatery process as well as examples of previously submitted parklet applications, concept designs, and construction documents (SDOT, 2018).

The Public Space Management Program provides set of state-of-the-art placemaking tools available to residents across the city. While permitting is often seen as one of the most confusing and bureaucratic steps to getting approval for a project, the PSMP website provides an excellent example of how this often-confusing process can be simplified for residents wanting to implement a placemaking project. From the municipal side, the streamlined and consistent permitting process allows the city to maintain a database and track improvements that are on the ground across the City. Such databases are essential to check for conflicts, for example, when other types of public works or ROW project moves forward or potentially may destroy or conflict with the public space improvement. It can prevent permitting a street painting project on a street that is about to be torn up to lay water pipes, for example.

This program is housed in the Seattle Department of Transportation. While in other cities placemaking programs may be led and managed by planning, economic, or cultural arts arms of the City, Seattle has joined New York City and others in elevating the pedestrian realm as core work of the transportation department. Increasingly, departments of transportation are recognizing that they are service providers to citizens – like a utility – and need to be service oriented. The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) has prioritized resources dedicated to helping citizens – from permit coaches and workshops to Streatery Supplements and Parklet Handbooks. This service demonstrates that SDOT points to a program that is supportive and encouraging of its citizens, willing and able to help residents accomplish their placemaking visions.

MEMPHIS

In contrast to the three previous City-led, government initiated placemaking programs, Memphis' more grassroots placemaking initiatives make the city an outlier in this survey of cities. The "MEMFix" program, in particular, is a model of what can be accomplished through collaborative community-driven efforts and partnerships with local government. It's also a model for what community can achieve using philanthropic seed funding and crowdsourced project funding, rather than major allocations of City budget dollars or private sector funding by developers, to advance community-led projects. Placemaking efforts in Memphis demonstrate the potential of creative funding sources like crowdfunding to play an important role in the community engagement and empowerment process.

The MEMFix model

MEMFix refers to a unique, temporary, "pop-up" placemaking effort run by community volunteers with the intention of activating a vacant or dilapidated area of a city with creative placemaking or street design interventions. It started in 2011, when former Memphis Mayor A.C. Wharton used a $4.8 million grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies to establish an Innovation Delivery team to deliver data-driven, results-oriented solutions across city divisions to address some of the city's most pressing issues (Wharton, 2014). Bloomberg Philanthropies supported the development of Innovation Delivery Teams in Memphis, Atlanta, Chicago, New Orleans, and Louisville as part of an effort predicated on the notion that mayors are uniquely positioned at the local level to develop innovative solutions to some of a city's most pressing challenges (NYU Wagner, 2012). The team, housed in the mayor's office, is made up of professional planners, community development organizers, attorneys, and other local and national professionals. Innovation Delivery teams choose specific issues on which to focus their efforts on depending on the challenges their city is facing. One such issue that the "I-team" in Memphis identified was neighborhood economic vitality. Out of this, MEMFix was born – a model program that empowers neighborhoods to transform city blocks into temporary community gathering places through pop-up shops, marketplaces and painting projects, or street design projects that increase walkability and biking (Wharton, 2014).

MEMFix arose from the idea that public/private partnerships can produce substantial change in a city; the MEMFix model works with communities to redesign and temporarily activate specific city blocks over a weekend to demonstrate the "art of the possible" (MEMFix, 2018). MEMFix engages community members and residents in a variety of projects ranging from bike lanes, pedestrian access, community gardens, parks, and green space to show the neighborhood the potential positive effects of quality public

spaces (MEMFix, 2018). These events vary in size, from four blocks to one intersection, and showcase the distinct identities of the existing neighborhoods ('MEMFix: The MEMFix Manual'). In order for an event to fit the MEMFix model it must: be community-driven; reflect the strengths and needs of each neighborhood; focus on bringing attention to or deliberately generating neighborhood change ("not just a block party"); build social capital; and be low risk and low cost (MEMFix, 2018). The intent of MEMFix is to "catalyze energy and interest in a neighborhood so that more permanent actions may be taken" ('MEMFix: The MEMFix Manual').

"New Face for an Old Broad"

To understand the origins of MEMFix, it is first important to understand the grassroots and community-driven character of the city of Memphis, exemplified in the project that led to the start of MEMFix – the "New Face for an Old Broad" event. Broad Street, a historic commercial street in Memphis, faced a slow decline as its placeless streetscape, zooming with cars and full of vacant storefronts, remained uninviting and forgotten. In 2006, a small-area neighborhood plan was created by the surrounding community in collaboration with the City with the intention of revitalizing the neighborhood; however, by 2010, the plan still sat stagnant with no action taken (personal communication, February 5, 2018). Drawing inspiration from Dallas, Texas' Better Block phenomenon, in which volunteers commandeered two streets in a dilapidated neighborhood in Dallas with improvements such as pop-up shops, street patios, and planters, community volunteers in Memphis took Broad Street into their own hands, creatively titling the event, New Face for an Old Broad (NFOB) (Young, 2014).

A two-day event held in November 2010, community volunteers led by the stakeholders involved in creating the original neighborhood plan, cleaned up and painted

three blocks of derelict buildings, filled vacant storefronts with temporary vendors, imported trees and attractive street lights, and restructured the streets with fewer vehicle lanes, new bike lanes protected by sidewalks and parked cars, and colorful and more commanding crosswalks (Young, 2014). Hoping for a turnout of 5,000 people, that number was far surpassed when between 14,000 and 15,000 visitors turned out to see what the effect of a little love on a neglected Memphis neighborhood looked like (Young, 2014). Installments meant to be temporary began to stick – the neighborhood continued to foster and implement placemaking projects like public art, night markets, and façade improvements (personal communication, February 5, 2018). As of 2014, the neighborhood had seen $20 million in private investments, more than 25 new businesses, and more than 90 percent occupancy in its buildings (Young).

Partnering with Local Government

During NFOB, volunteers made up of neighborhood associates, community organizations, and University of Memphis planning students followed the City Engineer's guidelines (using outdoor latex paint) when installing the temporary street design changes (Young, 2014). Instead of regulating their every move however, City Engineers cut the volunteers loose with general guidance, acknowledging the grassroots nature of the event and allowing them to learn what was allowed and the limits to what they could do innovatively and creatively within what was legal (Young, 2014).

Branded by the Innovation Delivery Team as 'MEMFix' and meant as an extended version of NFOB, the inaugural MEMFix event in the Crosstown neighborhood of the city in 2012 drew almost 10,000 people and garnered the support of seven Government Divisions, highlighting the collaborative nature of MEMFix events (MEMFix, 2018). One division of the City, Memphis Light, Gas & Water, helped repaint

utility poles on a major street while other anchor institutions, such as the University Memphis, Rhodes College, the Church Health Center, and Memphis College of Art volunteered their time alongside the City (Bailey, 2014).

For this event, City Engineers allowed volunteers to use spray chalk for pedestrian crossings on the street, allowing MEMFix planners to test different types of pedestrian crossing that hadn't typically been used in the city (Young, 2014).While the event helped to "re-establish the Crosstown neighborhood on the mental map of Memphians" and bolstered the economic component by filling seven vacant storefronts, it also provided local government the opportunity to "test new and innovative ideas about infrastructure, develop neighborhood economic development strategies and to generally prototype new ways to deliver services and build social capital with the community" (MEMFix, 2018).

This model of community-driven effort is now a regular and accepted practice in Memphis' City Departments (Young, 2014). Tommy Pacello was a staff member of the Innovation Delivery team and one of the leading planners of the MEMFix movement. He reports that adaptive and perceptive city leadership has been critical to providing an environment that's conducive to continued grassroots innovation (Young, 2014). He recognized the city's head engineer for his progressivity and insight and his willingness to support and collaborate with MEMFix projects (Young, 2014).

As Pacello notes, Memphis' lean style of government allowed events like NFOB and MEMFix to occur because there is less government regulation and bureaucracy in place than in other cities (personal communication, February 5, 2018). He acknowledges that the City of Memphis has bigger fish to fry – issues like crime and poverty are often at the forefront of its agenda. Despite this fact, Pacello and his team made an effort to inform and collaborate with government and abide by government regulations. For

example, a Special Events permit was used as a tool to legitimize MEMFix events, and City Engineers drew traffic control plans for the different events (personal communication, February 5, 2018). While the City also required installments to be temporary (only lasting one weekend), many installments eventually became permanent and many vacant storefronts became permanently occupied.

In a collaborative effort, the City offers police and EMS presence at events, and Public Works offers to pick up trash at the end of an event to keep event costs down (personal communication, February 7, 2018). In addition, the City's Parks Department lets event organizers borrow potted plants from the City's tree nursery for temporary street greening projects (personal communication, February 7, 2018).

After the first two MEMFix events, the Mayor's Innovation Delivery Team handed off the planning and implementation of MEMFix events to BLDG Memphis, a non-profit in the city. BLDG Memphis has planned and implemented one MEMFix event per year since 2012 (personal communication, February 7, 2018). Before each event, BLDG Memphis conducts round table meetings with points of contact from each City Division to keep all parties informed and on the same page (personal communication, February 7, 2018). Collaboration with the City and the willing participation of City staff in support of projects continues to be essential.

Creative Funding

While the first MEMFix project was funded through a Bloomberg Philanthropies grant, Memphis has since relied on other ways of funding placemaking projects in the city. The budget for a typical MEMFix event, which usually entails "pop-up" shops and vendors, live music, art installations, and temporary street design installations like painted bike lanes and crosswalks, ranges from $20,000-$40,000 (personal

communication, February 7, 2018). The most recent MEMFix project was funded by a combination of a sponsorship, a $10,000 ULI grant, and a $5,000 Medical District grant (personal communication, February 7, 2018). Grants for MEMFix events range between $5,000 and $50,000 (personal communication, February 7, 2018).

One of the most creative funding sources comes from the community mobilizing crowdfunding platform, ioby, launched in Memphis in 2012 (Pelley, 2017). Ioby has two full-time staff members working in the city as coaches for people interested in neighborhood change projects (personal communication, February 5, 2018). Ioby aims to help people develop ideas to make communities safer, greener, and more livable by doing what it calls "crowd-resourcing" – crowdfunding alongside resource organizing (Pelley, 2017). Furthermore, ioby staff members coach residents on how to navigate bureaucracy and make the best use of the placemaking tools available to them (personal communication, February 5, 2018). Since its launch, $610,000 has been raised for 203 projects around the city (Pelley, 2017). Of the projects, 109 aim to make streets safer and 262 focus on placemaking, while 71% of all the projects also have a social justice objective (Pelley, 2017).

Community Engagement

Ioby has also played a critical role in the community engagement and empowerment process (personal communication, February 5, 2018). Pacello points out the importance of thinking in a "we" mindset rather than an "us" versus "them" mindset when implementing a project (personal communication, February 5, 2018). Rather than the City or a higher power coming into a neighborhood and implementing a project, he states, it should be a collaborative, engaged effort between the two. Ioby works to identify the neighborhood leaders in a community to get this process of community

engagement started. After identifying these leaders, ioby staff members conduct interviews with them and begins to develop a mechanism for stakeholders and residents to talk to each other (personal communication, February 5, 2018). The idea ioby encourages is, "if you have an idea, do it!" (personal communication, February 5, 2018). It only takes donations of small amounts to create big change (personal communication, February 5, 2018). As a result of this gathering of stakeholders, residents develop trust with each other and work together to plan and implement projects in their community (personal communication, February 5, 2018).

As a result of these community-lead efforts, people feel emboldened to take ownership of their neighborhoods (personal communication, February 5, 2018). Working on and planning events together generates social capital among neighbors and results in a kind of organic community building process. As Pacello notes, community building happens in small conversations rather than big town hall meetings (personal communication, February 5, 2018). This kind of grassroots project planning allows for small conversations to happen in a natural, organic way that allows residents to feel empowered by the tools they have to make their neighborhoods better places to live (personal communication, February 5, 2018).

Community Project Implementation Manual

One of the most helpful and resourceful outcomes of the MEMFix movement is the MEMFix Manual, a toolkit intended to guide communities across the nation through their own MEMFix project ('MEMFix: The MEMFix Manual'). The manual intends to take best practices from each MEMFix project, walk one through the planning stages, and make suggestions for hosting one's own initiative ('MEMFix: The MEMFix Manual'). This manual is rich in useful information, from creating a work and site plan, tips for

working with the City and getting needed permits, to a checklist of tasks for the day of the actual event ('MEMFix: The MEMFix Manual'). In addition, the manual provides a budget and event comparison, a budgeting chart for event cost planning, a planning checklist, a day-of survey template for MEMFix event attendees, a design & PR checklist, and a volunteer checklist, among other things ('MEMFix: The MEMFix Manual'). Figure 5 shows the Events Comparison chart included in the manual. The manual is an extremely useful tool for communities planning their own MEMFix-like events.

Unlike other cities, Memphis is unique in that it has a model and an avenue for citizens to take initiative with their own placemaking projects when the City does not have capacity to do so. While collaborating with the City remains an important part of their process, leaders and volunteers of the MEMFix events, such as BLDG Memphis staff, University of Memphis and Rhodes College students, and community organizations and neighborhood stakeholders, are empowered by their ability to engage each other in the community building process, finding creative and innovative ways to implement projects as a grassroots, community-led effort.

details	New Face for an Old Broad	Crosstown	Highland & Walker	South MEMFix	The Edge
date	11/20/2010	11/10/2012	4/13/2013	10/12/2013	10/18/2014
hours	Fri 5-9 pm; Sat 11 am – 8 pm	10 am – 10 pm	10 am – 6 pm	12 pm – 6 pm	10 am – 8 pm
# of pop-up shop fronts	18	7 shop fronts	3 shop fronts	5 shop fronts	7 shop fronts
# of other pop-ups – parks, skate parks, gardens, etc.	1 – climbing wall	3 – skate park, demonstration garden, park	1 - demonstration garden	2 – demonstration garden, community planning booth	3 – beer garden wellness lounge/ cycling studio, planning office
# of mobile retailer	n/a	7 – food trucks	1	1 green machine, 3 food trucks	14 – retail and food trucks
# of outdoor vendors	8	56	23	0	35
# of stages	1	2	2	1	2
bike lanes	Semi-permanent	Temporary	Some permanent, other temp	No	Permanent
curb bump-outs/crosswalks	Semi-permanent	Temporary	Temporary	Permanent	Permanent
wayfinding	Temporary	Temporary	Temporary	Temporary	Permanent/ Temporary
neighborhood signage	Temporary	Temporary	Temporary	Permanent	Permanent
stenciling	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
plants	Permanent	Temporary	Yes	Permanent	Temporary to Permanent
planters	Permanent	Temporary	Yes	Permanent	Permanent
furniture	No	Temporary	Temporary	Temporary	Temp/Permanent
approximate budget	$20,000	$27,000	$15,000	$22,000	$22,000
sponsorships	$20,000	$1,500	$15,000	n/a	$7,000
grants/other	n/a	$25,500	n/a	$22,000	$15,000
existing CDC / neighborhood or business association	CDC & BA	No	CDC	CDC & NA	No
trash cans	Permanent	Temporary	Temporary	Permanent	Permanent/Temp

Figure 5: MEMFix Manual events comparison chart.

Chapter 6: Takeaways and Recommendations

The City of Austin, and other cities also striving to form their own placemaking and streetscape improvement programs, have much to learn from cities like San Francisco, Minneapolis, Seattle, and Memphis. These four cities have been successful in a variety of ways, from empowering citizens to fund, plan, and implement their own placemaking projects by providing a toolkit of resources to creating impressively accessible, navigable, comprehensive websites. Planners looking to promote and implement placemaking projects in their own cities can take full advantage of available resources, including past and present examples of cities that have successfully created programs and implemented projects. This peer city review has identified important "takeaways" from each city's experiences with placemaking. In closing, this report summarizes some of the major challenges and barriers each city has encountered along the way, highlighting some of the most important lessons learned along with suggestions for the City of Austin as it develops is own Streets as Places program. Finally, it includes some overarching observations and suggestions for the City of Austin and its peer cities.

SAN FRANCISCO

Planning staff in San Francisco recommend that city staff working to plan and develop a placemaking program emphasize both internally and externally that early pilot projects, and interim installations, are temporary experiments to inform longer-term decisions to ease both community concerns and concerns surrounding liabilities. In order to do so, staff could consider permitting with encroachment permits that have a life of one year to emphasize a project's temporary nature. When the permit life expires, enable the permit to be eligible for renewal upon review. In addition, city staff in San Francisco offer the following suggestions:

- Use internal concerns around risk and liability to motivate and argue for the need for placemaking legislation that covers liability and risk concerns. This is something that San Francisco and other cities are still trying to figure out. However, San Francisco's Better Streets Policy, which requires City agencies to coordinate the planning, design and use of public rights-of-way to carry out the vision for streets outlined in the policy, is a great starting point.
- Position placemaking projects in a larger policy framework such as an adopted Complete Streets policy and the resident-priotitized goals documented in neighborhood plans. Staff time and resources for placemaking projects should be built in and included with these other projects. Framing smaller, more temporary placemaking projects as part of a larger place investment strategy helps communities see their longer-term value. In turn, the project's successful outcome will be linked to and will influence policy and plans that are already in place, leading to more permanent change in the long-run.
- Start with the community – begin by asking residents what they want. For City-led projects, outline the positive impacts communities can enjoy with these projects.
- Don't get too caught up in the aesthetic dimensions of these projects – the most important aspect of placemaking is building community capacity while achieving equity. Concentrate on the ultimate goal. For example, San Francisco uses Pavement to Parks as a way of giving neighborhoods that don't have access to parks a green space in their community.
- Pilot projects (Ad hoc experiments) can slowly inform and develop into mature programs that are more institutionalized.

MINNEAPOLIS

To address or avoid some potential setbacks and to offer general advice to cities starting their own placemaking efforts, Minneapolis staff members involved in the creation of the Placemaking Hub and the implementation of placemaking projects in the city offer some takeaways from their own experiences:

- When the City does have money from grants or other sources, prioritize the neighborhoods that are traditionally underrepresented or underserved. Because the current funding system favors neighborhoods with money and resources to fund and apply for various projects, this will improve the equitable distribution of placemaking projects across the city.
- Concentrate application submissions and permitting requests to one or two times during the year rather than throughout the year. This creates greater efficiencies for staff.
- Add placemaking programs and projects over a period of time rather than all at once.
- Don't start with the difficult programs, like creating a whole new set of regulatory guidance, rules, permits, and processes for parklets). Start with a project achievable within existing city rules where you can be successful relatively quickly and then take on more complicated programs later.
- Document metrics of project success and collect data to support a project's benefit. Trying things and evaluating them is important – document the good and the bad.
- Everything does not have to be 100% figured out before starting. Understand that the development of projects and programs is an incremental process – talk to and learn from other cities.

- Start with a clear, outlined vision that is publicly stated and affirmed – policy approval offers a very strong foundation. For example, Minneapolis' Transportation Action Plan laid the foundation for many placemaking projects in the city.
- People are generally accepting and will warm up to a project even if they offer pushback at first.
- Community engagement is a fundamental aspect of any process. It is important to inform and work with the community before a project goes into their neighborhood.
- Once a program is established, it is not difficult to maintain and usually takes up less and less dedicated staff time.

SEATTLE

These takeaways are some of the lessons the City of Seattle has learned in their management of the PSMP:

- Frame projects in a way the public can get on board with. For example, point out that the addition of bike parking in front of businesses encourages bikers to stop and shop, which strengthens the local economy. Use metrics to demonstrate the benefits to the public versus the impact of the project.
- Before project implementation, outline the possible challenges or problems that may arise and how to approach and deal with these problems in order to be prepared.
- Consider taking on projects that are fairly low cost/big impact, such as a Pavement to Park program.

- In-house programs funded through sources like development impact fees rather than grants or permits can be a more equitable and streamlined approach.
- Build a support coalition of political and community support alongside staff support from multiple departments.

MEMPHIS

For more grassroots, community-led models, leaders of the MEMFix movement offer some takeaways and lessons learned in addition to reflections on challenges and how to address them. These takeaways apply to both community members wanting to start their own placemaking projects and local governments initiating placemaking programs:

- Understanding what the City allows and doesn't allow is a learning process. Establish a City Placemaking Committee made up of someone from each division of government who has the ability to give a project a 'yes' or a 'no.' Aim for "meetings of 'yes'," where a working process is established to turn 'no's into 'yes's.
- Not every project will work but the idea is to do small projects so that it is okay if they are not successful. Pay attention to the context of a neighborhood so that the project is a good fit and more likely to be successful.
- Projects should be sensitive to the economic conditions of varying neighborhoods – some neighborhoods are ripe and ready for placemaking projects while others may not have the capacity because they are dealing with more serious concerns like crime and safety.
- Allow projects to occur naturally in the right place and the right fit. Don't force projects to happen somewhere.

- Use the toolkit of placemaking projects *with* a place instead of *on* a place. Work with and engage the community and allow them to generate ideas and feel empowered by talking to and planning with each other.
- Temporary projects can have long-lasting impacts.
- Create a program that enables projects to happen on their own – with little to no government intervention. Provide the tools necessary for communities to make neighborhood change themselves.
- It only takes one or two blocks to achieve a placemaking effort – the private market will then help things take root.
- Consider a model where a nonprofit or third-party entity serves as advisors or coaches to community members and residents using placemaking tools in their own neighborhoods, rather than the nonprofit taking the lead in planning and implementing projects.
- Grassroots efforts need the support of local government. It is important for a city's local government to create a line-item budget for creative placemaking programs as well as a clear citywide policy for how the city engages with neighborhood organizations regarding placemaking projects.
- As City government, consider matching the funds raised through crowdfunding campaigns in order to support placemaking efforts.

CONCLUSION

Both government-initiated placemaking activities and community-led placemaking efforts struggle with the challenges of closing policy gaps, creating comprehensive plans and programs that have a broad base of understanding and support, and working through regulatory barriers that exist in city government. Risk and liability

concerns remain a challenge in the project approval process and pose a significant barrier to implementing creative placemaking projects. Nonetheless, interviews across cities cumulatively display a need and desire for city support in the realm of policy and legislative backing as well as funding for placemaking programs and projects. This reveals a tension between wanting a more organic, community led placemaking process without regulatory barriers and restrictions and needing government support to provide the policy and financial support necessary for a successful program.

Furthermore, all cities cited the importance of authentic community leadership and engagement for project success. Without excellent, interactive communication and listening to the community, cities can expect community pushback or negative perceptions around various projects. When discussing community involvement and engagement with implementing placemaking projects, many cities expressed an equity and funding conundrum. A lack of funding and a tight budget for placemaking programs naturally favors more affluent neighborhoods, as residents in these neighborhoods are more likely to have the ability to provide the funding and resources necessary to sponsor or apply for a project. To remedy this, the cities interviewed suggest a variety of potential solutions, including internally selecting the site and location of individual projects rather than accepting external resident applications, applying for grant funding and specifically using this funding for projects in underrepresented neighborhoods, or using a crowdfunding platform like ioby to work with residents across the city to raise funds, plan, and implement projects in their own communities.

Major Takeaways/Recommendations

The following represent common themes and suggestions offered across the four cities interviewed and major takeaways and recommendations for the City of Austin in

the organization of Streets as Places, as well as other cities planning and developing their own programs:

Program Organization and Development

Cities should start with a clear, outlined vision for the program that is publicly stated and affirmed. The vision needs to be above the staff level and should result from a community stakeholder process that allows community members to have input, resulting in an adopted plan or vision document, as in San Francisco's Better Streets Plan. The policy framework can follow initial work on pilot projects, but to advance to a more mature program, it is necessary at some point to have clear policy guidance. This will help make the business case to get resources in the City budget process, support from staff across multiple City departments and divisions, and from partners and the community.

Start with smaller, easier to implement projects that require less resources and capacity, then take on more complicated projects later. Cities should consider taking on projects that are fairly low cost/big impact and be aware that temporary projects can have long-lasting impacts. Placemaking programs and projects can be added to the toolkit over a period of time rather than all at once and it is important to remember that the development of projects and programs is an incremental process – the nuts and bolts are figured out along the way.

Once a program is established, it is not difficult to maintain. Projects require less staff dedication over time. Cities should strive to create a program that enables projects to happen on their own – with little to no government intervention – and provide the tools necessary for communities to make neighborhood change themselves. In this regard, cities might consider a model where a nonprofit or third-party entity serves as advisors or

coaches to community members and residents using placemaking tools in their own neighborhoods, rather than the nonprofit or City taking the lead in planning and implementing projects.

Website Development

Table 2 shows the type of information contained on the three placemaking websites discussed. At a minimum, the Streets as Places website and peer city placemaking websites should include: a permit process overview; design guidelines for individual programs; application forms for individual programs; a point of contact for each program; and any additional city plans, handbooks, or manuals that could be a helpful resource to applying for or implementing a project.

In addition to this information, it is helpful to provide a "Merchant's Corner" (as shown in the SF Better Streets model) of projects and programs that specifically apply to and address the needs of business and merchant's associations in the city, such as façade improvement, bicycle corrals, or street trees. To further assist residents in the permit process, create a similar simplified permit summary chart demonstrated previously in the Seattle model shown in Figure 3. In addition, consider hosting permit workshops at designated times throughout the year to assist residents with project permit applications.

Type of Information	San Francisco (SF Better Streets)	Minneapolis (Placemaking Hub)	Seattle (PSMP)
Department home	San Francisco Planning; Public Works; San Francisco Metropolitan Transportation Authority; SF Water,Power, Sewer	Community Planning & Economic Development (Long Range Planning)	Seattle Department of Transportation
Business owner/ merchant-specific info.	X	X	
Developer-specific info.	X		
Public space permitting counter/workshops			X
Permit process overview	X	X	X
Permit process by project type	X	X	X
Permit process by project sponsor	X		
Permit summary table	X		X
Funding & technical resources	X		X
Maintenance requirements	X		
Design guidelines	X	X	X
Application	X	X	X
Point of contact	X	X	X
Individual program FAQ sheets		X	
Program metrics			X
Additional applicable plans/handbooks/manuals	X	X	X

Table 2: Placemaking website summary information.

Policy and Legislative Foundation

Placemaking is most successful if backed by policy and legislation supported by City Council and in Austin's case, the City Manager. In order to support placemaking efforts, local government should create a line-item budget for creative placemaking programs as well as a clear citywide policy for how the City engages with and supports neighborhood organizations regarding placemaking projects, similar to San Fransisco's Better Streets Policy. As City government, consider matching the funds raised through crowdfunding campaigns in order to support placemaking efforts.

Furthermore, linking placemaking projects to Complete Streets policy, Vision Zero, CodeNEXT, or Austin's Strategic Mobility Plan can give placemaking policy support and help frame it as part of a larger longer-term place investment strategy. Policy approval offers a very strong foundation for placemaking projects.

Community Engagement and Stakeholder Support

Document metrics of project success and collect data to support a project's benefit to the community. Frame projects in a way the public can get on board with and use metrics to demonstrate the benefits to the public versus the costs of the project.

Community engagement is an important part of any project. Neighborhood context is important for determining if projects are a good fit for certain areas. Use the toolkit of placemaking projects *with* a place instead of *on* a place. Work with and engage the community and allow them to generate ideas and feel empowered by talking to and planning with each other.

Internal Coordination and Support

Build a support coalition of political and community support alongside staff support from multiple departments and establish a City Placemaking Committee made up of representatives from individual departments who can review and streamline the approval process.

Concluding Remarks

Given the challenges the City of Austin is currently facing in the development of Streets as Places, particularly regulatory barriers and lack of resources and capacity, it is important to highlight two recommendations from this list, specifically, creating a program that allows projects to happen on their own, and considering a model where a non-profit organizations or third-party entities serve as advisors or coaches to community members utilizing the placemaking toolkit organized by the City. Creating a placemaking toolkit that is available, accessible, and navigable to the community – and that balances responsible municipal oversight with granting creative initiative and freedom to advance innovative, community-led projects – is essential. As peer cities have demonstrated, with sustained effort a City can support community creativity and investment in placemaking projects by reducing unnecessary regulatory, cost, and process barriers common to local government.

Further studies might consider exploring how a city's form of government influences the development or overall success of a city placemaking program. For example, research might investigate how the development of placemaking programs and projects fares in cities with strong mayor forms of government versus cities with strong city manager types of government. This could help cities better navigate the challenges common to each type. Additionally, further studies might consider researching how well placemaking websites similar to those belonging to San Francisco, Minneapolis, and Seattle are working from a resident's standpoint by interviewing residents who have used the websites and navigated the content, processes, and permitting protocols they contain. Understanding how well these "accessible" websites work in practice would be valuable knowledge for cities interested in organizing their own placemaking program websites.

Placemaking efforts in Austin and in other cities will be most successful if they are both "top down" and "bottom up." To advance to the level of San Francisco, Seattle, Minneapolis, and Memphis, a Streets as Places program at the City of Austin will need to be supported by city official, city management, and policy and legislation that comes from the top – the City Manager and City Council. It is clear that across the cities interviewed in this study, placemaking efforts are most successful when backed by adopted plans and clear adopted policy.

A key challenge now facing Austin is making it possible for non-profit or grassroots entities to successfully plan, organize, and implement placemaking projects. With a toolkit of projects in place, and an understanding and affirmation of their success and benefit to the public, placemaking projects valued by the people of Austin can advance in a spirit of creativity and community empowerment, backed by essential government resources. The example of Memphis, where placemaking is mostly initiated by non-profit or community entities, is one that should be explored in further depth as well. Places for people benefit from the expertise of professional planners – but they benefit most from the insights and passionate involvement of the people who want them and will activate them daily. Cities serve the people who live in them, as do placemaking projects.

Appendix A: Interview Questions

1.First of all, there are varying definitions of placemaking - what does placemaking mean to you, especially in the context of _____[insert city/placemaking program]_____?

2. What was the reason behind_____[insert city/placemaking program]_____? How did it get started? What is your role in the program? Was this City Council approved? How did you identify the need for the program?

3. Was there a leader – person, organization, department, etc. – instrumental to getting this started?

4. Who did you collaborate with - person, organization, department, etc. – to make this happen? Did you have support from the City?

5. How much staffing does this program require? What are their roles?

6. Where does the funding for this program come from? What is the overall budget?

7. How do you decide and who decides where and on what to spend the money?

8. How do you navigate community needs and desires? What is the community engagement process like? **how are you reaching businesses?

9. How is maintenance addressed? Who pays for it? How compliance is addressed (ex. Graffiti on art boxes)

10. What challenges do you encounter? How do you deal with these?

11. How did you navigate City review and permitting processes when organizing this program?

12. What is the status of the program today?

13. Is there anything you would change about the process or implementation of any projects knowing what you know now? What are the most important takeaways from your experience?

14. What do you see as the greatest success of the program?

Appendix B: Sample Maintenance Agreement

PARKLET SUPPORT AND MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT FOR BUSINESSES

SDOT
Seattle Department of Transportation

Parklet permits issued by the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) are subject to specific maintenance and support conditions that are the responsibility of the parklet host. These conditions ensure that the parklets remain clean, safe, and in a state of good repair for all members of the public to enjoy. SDOT may revoke the permit from any parklet host that fails to comply with the following agreement.

Parklets Are Public Space

I agree to keep my parklet free and open to all members of the public, regardless of whether or not they patronize my business.

I will not provide table service at my parklet. I understand that all table service must be confined to the interior of my building or my permitted sidewalk café.

Daily Support

On a daily basis, I agree to:

- Lock up or stow all moveable tables and chairs prior to the close of business.
- Sweep the parklet surface and the area surrounding the parklet.
- Water and maintain the parklet's vegetation.
- Clean the parklet platform, seating, and other parklet elements.
- Remove any debris, litter, grime, or graffiti from the parklet.
- Replace any failing parklet elements or components.

Weekly Support

On a weekly basis, I agree to:

- Rinse the area underneath the parklet surface.
- Remove any debris that is impeding drainage flow along the curb and gutter beneath the parklet surface.
- Provide pest control (if necessary).

Annual Support

I understand that parklet permits must be renewed on an annual basis. As part of the renewal I agree to:

- Pay the renewal fee.
- Replace all parklet components that have experienced significant wear and tear.
- Submit an updated certificate of liability insurance and list the City of Seattle as an additional insured.

Parklet Removal

I understand that if my business changes ownership, I will either need to remove my parklet or transfer the permit to the new owner.

I understand that the City of Seattle may require me to temporarily remove my parklet under certain circumstances. I agree that I am responsible for all duties and costs associated with the parklet removal.

Temporary removal may be required when:

- Planned streetscape improvements occur.
- A public safety or public utility emergency occurs.

In these situations, I may need to store my parklet off-site. I agree not to reinstall my parklet until instructed by the City of Seattle.

I understand that permanent removal may be required when:

- The parklet presents a major public safety hazard.
- I fail to comply with the conditions specified in this maintenance and support agreement.

Upon permanent removal of my parklet, I agree to restore the street area covered by the parklet to its original or better condition.

SIGNATURE: _____ **DATE:** _____

NAME: _____

BUSINESS: _____

PARKLET ADDRESS: _____

PERMIT NUMBER: _____

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